NEWS /A2

Korina Sanchez suspended for one week by ABS-CBN

SUNDAY BIZ /B1

Jewelry enterprise built by Dayrit children began with packet of loose pearls

TALK OF THE TOWN /A12

UP review committee explains tuition increases in country's premier state university

SPORTS /A24

So, 13, youngest ever RP national chess champion

Study says optimists outliving pessimists

NEW YORK—OPTIMISTS TEND TO ENJOY longer lives than people with a dimmer outlook on the future, a long-term study suggests.

Researchers found that of nearly 7,000 adults followed since their college days in the 1960s, those who were optimistic in their youth had a lower risk of dying over the next 40 years than their more pessimistic peers.

STUDY/ A7

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER Sunday
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Sunday, December 24, 2006 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 16 P18 website: inquirer.net

Santa's popularity only Bush could dream about

WASHINGTON—SANTA Claus lives and continues to make glad the hearts of young and old alike.

Fully 86 percent of Americans believe in Santa Claus when they were children, according to an

SANA AKO SIKAT DIN!

SANTA'S/ A7

Abra gov cries frame-up

American volunteers bring cheer to evacuees

By Ephraim Aguilar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—CHRISTMAS CAME early this year for survivors of Supertyphoon "Reming" in Barangay Padang, this city.

A group of US Peace Corps volunteers and members of the Pag-asa Youth Association of the Philippines (PYAP) threw a Christmas party on Wednesday for some 150 young survivors of the village, which was washed out by lahar on Nov. 30 at the height of Reming.

The volunteers had been here since Tuesday, sprucing up the Gogon Elementary School, where more than 400 families from Padang have sought shelter.

"We made a Christmas tree and a little snowman made of paper, filled the room with decor, prepared food and facilitated games for children, who sang Christmas carols," said Kate Kochersberger, who hails from New York.

The nine Peace Corps volunteers asked for donations from their relatives in the United States, and tapped PYAP members and other youths from Padang to organize what would be the first sign of Christmas at the shelter.

"It was a lot of fun. The kids really enjoyed. The special numbers were prepared by the youths themselves. We gave away slippers, T-shirts and toys," Kochersberger said.

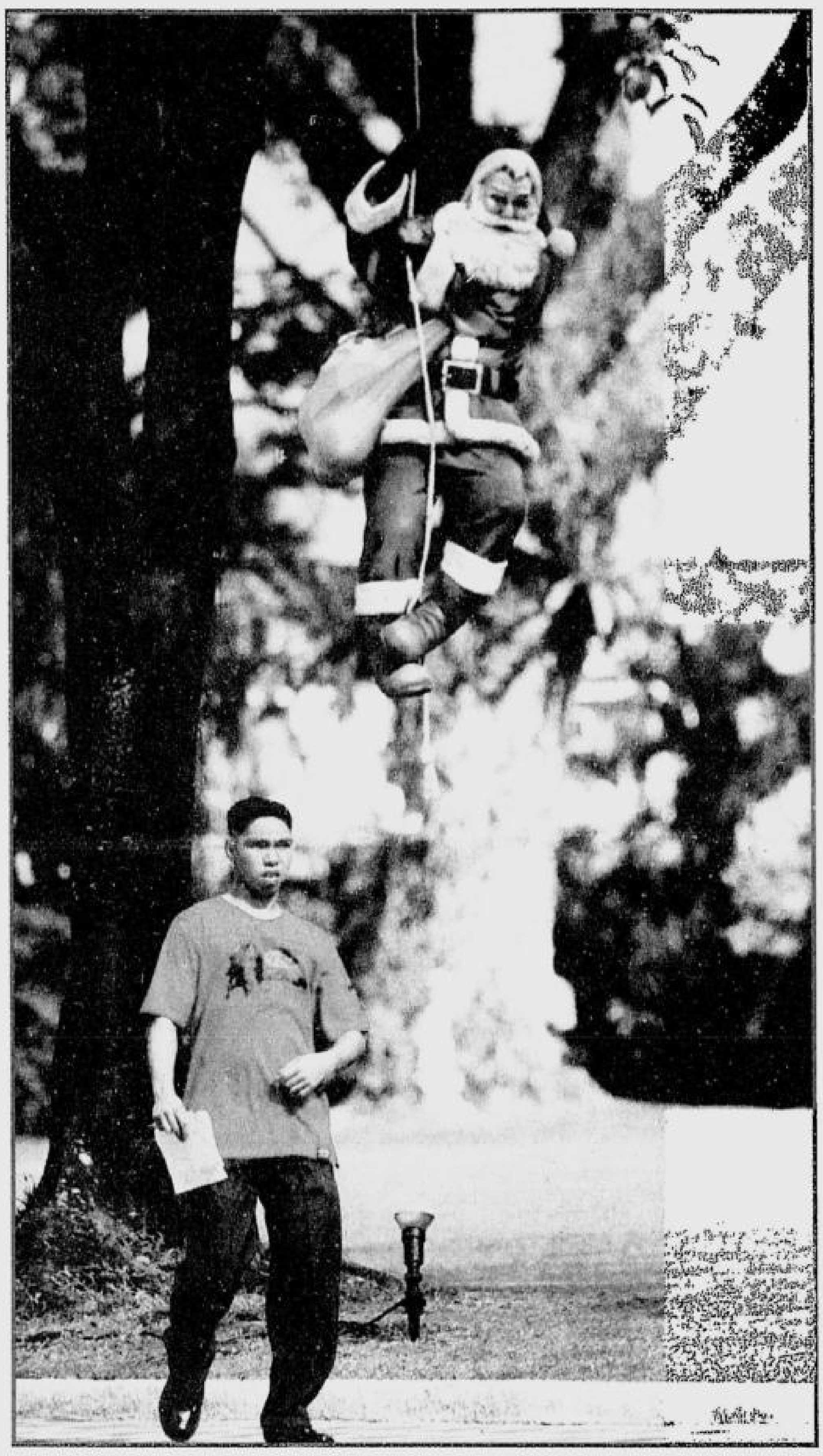
"Our goal was to help the kids be kids and hopefully, they will be able to leave the bad things behind," she added.

Julia Campbell, 39, who is also from New York and learned to speak Filipino in her 19 months of stay in Bicol, said: "*Minsan mahirap, pero masaya kami sa pagtulong* (Sometimes, it's hard but we are happy to help)."

Campbell was teaching English in a private college here, when successive typhoons struck and classes were suspended.

Busy with relief work for typhoon vic-

AMERICAN/ A7



HO! HO! HO! BOO!
A man walks on a road near the Kalayaan Hall at Malacañang, unmindful of a life-size Santa Claus figure hanging from a tree as a holiday decoration.
LYN RILLON

Valera denies role in solon's murder

By Volt Contreras

ABRA GOV. VICENTE Valera yesterday denied claims that he masterminded the murder of Rep. Luis "Chito" Bersamin Jr. and said he was "a victim of a vicious and coordinated frame-up."

In an interview with the INQUIRER somewhere in Metro Manila, Valera maintained that he had never gone into hiding and that he had been in the capital for the past two days to attend to family matters.

The 61-year-old Valera, accompanied by his lawyer Jose Aguila Grapilon, requested that his whereabouts be withheld, saying that police investigators were "out to get me and build up a case against me until I get incarcerated."

"I vehemently deny all of the vile and baseless accusations linking me to the untimely death of the late Congressman Chito Bersamin," Valera said in a prepared statement.

"My conscience is clear. I am the victim of a vicious and coordinated frame-up, although I am at a loss as to who the perpetrators are of these cruel lies."

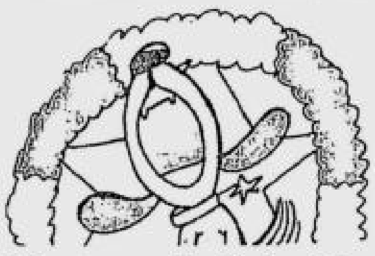
Bersamin, 62, and his police bodyguard Adelfo Ortega, 49, were gunned down outside the Mt. Carmel Church in Quezon City on Dec. 16 after attending the wedding of the Abra lawmaker's niece. Bersamin was reportedly planning to run as governor in next year's elections, possibly against Valera's wife who is the incumbent Bangued mayor.

Three days later, retired Army M/Sgt. Rufino Panday, was arrested in connection with the slayings that were ostensibly an offshoot of the volatile Abra politics. Panday told investigators that the killings were carried out by four other men and that he served as a lookout in the operation. (*See related stories on Page A6 and interview with Panday on Page A4.*)

ABRA GOV/ A6

WHAT'S INSIDE

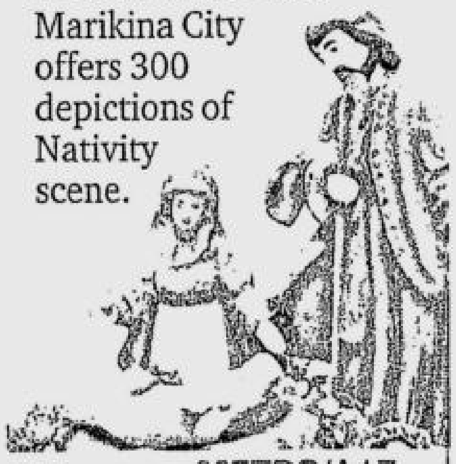
Brangelina Christmas
Angelina Jolie, Brad Pitt to teach kids about kindness this Christmas.
ENTERTAINMENT /E8



That good ol' feeling
What today's children may be missing during the holidays.
LIFESTYLE /C1

Suffolk strangler
British forklift operator charged with murders of 5 prostitutes.
WORLD/A20

Belen Museum
Marikina City offers 300 depictions of Nativity scene.



METRO/A17

Death list
Bayan Muna says 15 more members on killers' list of targets in Sorsogon.
ACROSS /A15

HK organ donor gives hope to 7 patients

HONG KONG—A HONG KONG SCHOOLboy who died in a traffic accident has brought festive hope to at least seven other patients through the rare mass donation of a large number of his vital organs.

Fourteen-year-old Miu Chi-ho died from brain injuries after being hit by a bus several days ago, but doctors were able to save the heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, skin, bones and corneas of the healthy and athletic teenager.

"There were at least seven recipients of the organs," said a spokesperson of Hong Kong's Hospital Authority.

Miu's 41-year-old mother, a single parent on social welfare, ignored the protests of superstitious relatives in insisting on the donations to "bring hope to other families," Hong Kong's Apple Daily newspaper reported on Friday.

"Even though I'm devastated, I want to do something for society," the paper quoted the mother as saying.

HK ORGAN DONOR/ A7

Bunye says canceled war games a setback to AFP modernization

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY ADmitted that the announced cancelation of next year's RP-US war games was a "setback" to the Philippines' military modernization program, and said the Court of Appeals should consider the country's "international commitment" in deciding on the custody case of Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, the spokesperson of President Macapagal-Arroyo, also said US authorities "surely understood" that the custody case of the American Marine convicted of raping a Filipino woman was now running the course of the Philippine judicial system.

Bunye said the Arroyo administration remained committed to the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement, and that it was taking the correct steps to resolve the issue.

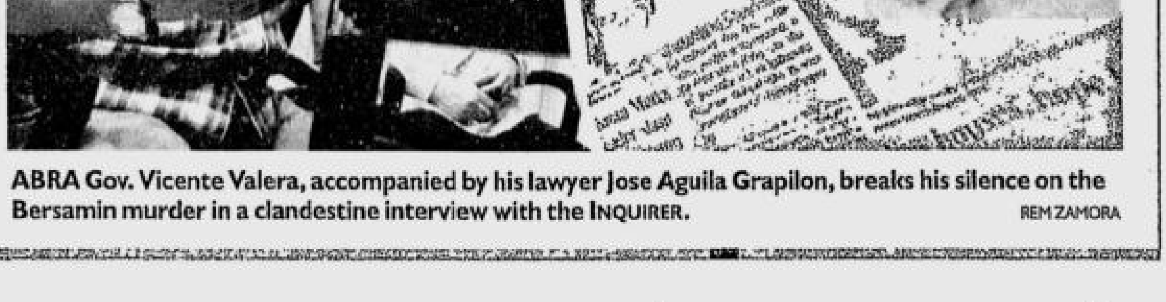
But Sen. Panfilo Lacson described as "arrogant political blackmail" the decision of the US government to cancel Balikatan 2007 as an offshoot of the Philippine courts' refusal to return Smith, 21, to US custody.

"The country's policymakers would be well advised not to be cowed by this arrogant political blackmail committed by the US government against an equally sovereign state over an issue that involves our own justice system," Lacson said.

Anak Mindanao Rep. Mujiv Hataman also said the US decision—announced by Adm. William Fallon, chief of the US Pacific Command, and confirmed by the US Embassy in Manila—was an act of blackmail.

"They (the United States) know that the Philippines is very dependent on them as the Philippines is weak in terms of countering insurgency and terror problems. They are using this weakness to blackmail our govern-

BUNYE/ A7


INQUIRER
Abra gov linked to solon's murder

ABRA Gov. Vicente Valera, accompanied by his lawyer Jose Aguila Grapilon, breaks his silence on the Bersamin murder in a clandestine interview with the INQUIRER.
REM ZAMORA

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2006
E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph
Second FRONT PAGE
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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern sections of Northern and Central Luzon and Southern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.
SOURCE PAGASA

COMPILED BY LAW DE GUZMAN, PDI RESEARCH/12/23/06

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

ABS-CBN suspends Korina for 1 week

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Entertainment

RADIO-TV BROADcaster Korina Sanchez has been suspended by ABS-CBN for one week effective Dec. 21.

On Thursday, Sanchez had stopped anchoring the late-night newscast "Bandila," her morning radio show on dzMM "Tambalang Failon at Sanchez," and the ANC talk show "Korina Today."

According to sources, the suspension covers all platforms—TV, radio and cable.

SANCHEZ

She, however, will appear in the Dec. 24 episode of "Rated K" today, because it's the magazine show's Christmas special.

"It was also pre-taped," sources said.

Sanchez was reprimanded by the network for "conflict of interest, several articles that called attention to her activities outside of the company, and an editorial lapse," the same sources said.

The "conflict of interest" case arose because Sanchez supposedly "operated a company that produced concerts" and this is in violation of the network's Code of Ethics, the sources said.

According to newspaper and tabloid articles, Sanchez is part of the creative team and a partner in ViKtory8 which recently produced a concert of the acoustic act M.Y.M.P.

Prior to the suspension, meetings were held between Sanchez and the network as early as September.

This was a juicy item in Victor C. Agustin's column "Cocktales," appearing in the business pages of the INQUIRER.

The meetings resulted in the sanction against Sanchez and for the matter not to be disclosed to media.

But since ABS-CBN's Code of Ethics dictates a policy of transparency, over a hundred News and Current Affairs employees had been informed of Sanchez's suspension.

The "internal memorandum" also mentioned that Sanchez had "agreed to divest" herself of shares in the company that she operated. And although Sanchez initially disagreed, she eventually "accepted the sanction in the end."

The INQUIRER tried to reach Sanchez, but she did not respond.

Maloli K. Espinosa, ABS-CBN vice president for Government, Corporate Affairs and PR, sent this statement to the INQUIRER: "Matters are resolved. Korina is abroad and will be back after the holidays. She is one of our most senior, hard-working and valued journalists."

The one-week suspension does not cover holidays, so it could last until after the Christmas season.

Sources said Sanchez would be back on air in January 2007.

The suspension case was a litmus test for the radio-TV personality, said another source close to Sanchez.

"She's at a crossroads. She seriously considered leaving the network because of her problems and because she was being wooed by politicians to run for the Senate in the 2007 elections."

In a recent survey by the Social Weather Stations, Sanchez tied with former Sen. Gregorio Honasan for the ninth and tenth spots in the list of possible winners in next year's senatorial elections.

SMC sells 65 percent Coke shares to US firm

FOOD AND BEVERAGE GIANT SAN Miguel Corp. (SMC) yesterday announced it had agreed to sell its 65 percent stake in local soft drinks firm Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. (CCBPI) to the world's largest softdrinks and non-carbonated drinks manufacturer, The Coca-Cola Company (TCCC).

In a joint statement yesterday, SMC and TCCC said they had signed a "definitive agreement" for the sale of SMC's 65 percent in CCBPI. The completion of the deal is still subject to certain conditions which were not disclosed yesterday afternoon.

CCBPI is the jointly owned bottling company which holds the Coca-Cola bottling agreement for the Philippines and includes Cosmos Bottling Corp. and Philippine Beverage Partners Inc.

SMC is currently the majority shareholder and has management control of CCBPI.

Sources said a deal was signed yesterday morning. A more comprehensive disclosure will be filed in the United States on Wednesday.

INQUIRER sources earlier said the sale of SMC's 65 percent stake to TCCC was worth $700 million. Sources yesterday further said that the final price would be determined after certain undisclosed conditions were met.

The deal comes amid falling sales volumes for soft drinks, as fruit juices, bottled tea and other noncarbonated drinks gain market share.

TCCC already owns CCBPI, which is the leading soft drinks company in the country and one of the top 10 Coke bottlers in the world.

Sources earlier said that after the sale, SMC would continue to supply glass to TCCC for bottled soft drinks. A "non-compete" clause in the sale contract would also bar SMC from reentering the soft drinks business for five years, the sources had said.

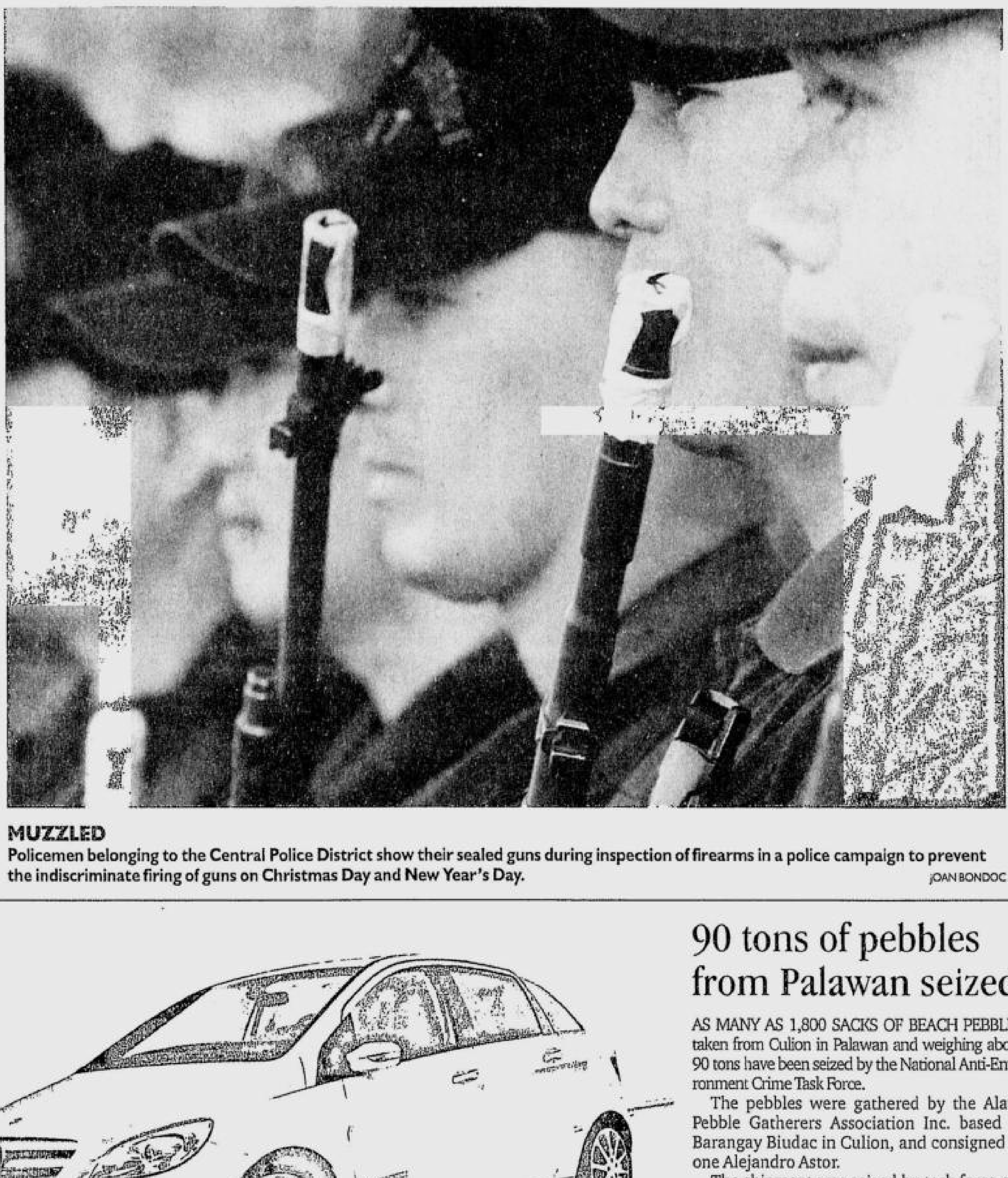
The agreement comes also amid allegations by a former employee of Cosmos Bottling Corp., a unit of the SMC's Coca-Cola Beverage Group, that the Coca-Cola Beverage Group may have inflated its accounts receivables by P20 billion over an unspecified period, which was denied by SMC.

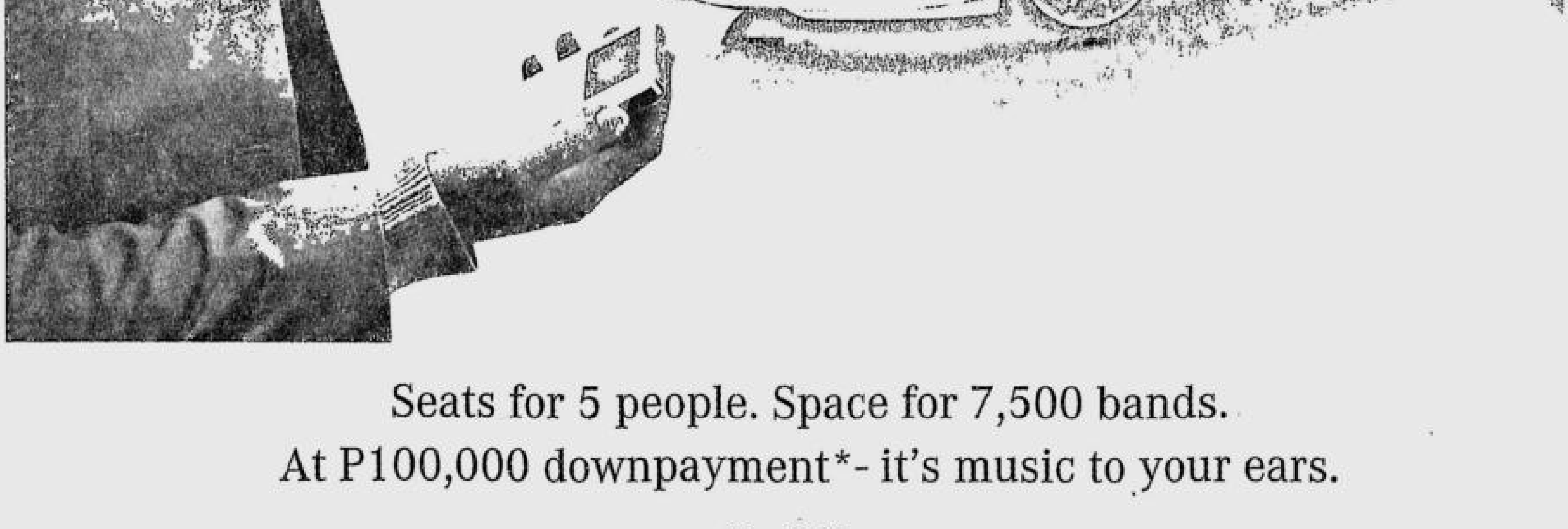
The allegation did not scuttle negotiations between SMC and TCCC, the sources said.

Discussions between the two beverage giants had been going on since July this year.

CCBPI accounts for 15 percent of SMC's total revenue and five percent of operating income.

In a report to the stock exchange, the Coca-Cola Beverage Group said sales volumes dropped 12 percent in the third quarter from a year earlier because of stiff competition from carbonated and noncarbonated beverage products. No absolute figures were disclosed.


MUZZLED
Policemen belonging to the Central Police District show their sealed guns during inspection of firearms in a police campaign to prevent the indiscriminate firing of guns on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.
JOAN BONDOC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90 tons of pebbles from Palawan seized

AS MANY AS 1,800 SACKS OF BEACH PEBBLES taken from Culion in Palawan and weighing about 90 tons have been seized by the National Anti-Environment Crime Task Force.

The pebbles were gathered by the Alava Pebble Gatherers Association Inc. based in Barangay Biudac in Culion, and consigned to one Alejandro Astor.

The shipment was seized by task force operatives in Bauan, Batangas, on Thursday.

The stones are so small—each about the size of a mung bean—that they no longer qualify under allowable pebble-picking in Philippine beaches, according to lawyer Lourdes Griarte and mining engineer Elmer Crisologo, both regional officers of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

"Their gathering already amounts to beach mining, which is against the law," Griarte told the INQUIRER. She cited Batas Pambansa 265, which prohibits the gathering of gravel and sand from beaches.

"Beach mining destroys the ecological balance and the natural beauty of our beaches," Griarte said.

Crisologo said pebble picking was allowed but that the stones picked in such operations should be of a certain size to qualify for commercial use, such as landscaping and finishing purposes in residences.
Norman Bordadora

Man hit by bishop's car dies in hospital

CAMP OLIVAS, PAMPANGA—A TRICYCLE driver hit by the car of Balanga Bishop Socrates Villegas died four hours after the accident in Orani, Bataan, on Friday night.

Insp. Antonio Apan, Orani police chief, said Reynaldo Morales, 32, died of multiple injuries he suffered from the accident.

The police were filing a case of homicide against Jonathan Gementisa, 54, the bishop's driver.

Gementisa, who was driving Villegas' Ford Lynx, hit Morales' parked tricycle after avoiding a carabao that crossed the Roman Highway in Barangay Bayan, Orani at past 8 p.m.

Apan said Morales died at the Catalina Isaac Hospital in Balanga City Friday midnight. *Tonette Orejas with a report from Greg Refraccion, Inquirer Central Luzon*

Mega-sayang Salubong mula sa Globe Kabalikat

Ika-18 ng Disyembre nagsimula ang Christmas Kabalikat Salubong sa Ninoy Aquino International Airport. Sinalubong nina Presidente Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo kasama ang ilang mga artista ang mga OFW na umuwi para sa Pasko.

HALA BIRA! Pinas na Pinas na ang feeling ng mga dumalo sa Christmas Kabalikat Salubong dahil sa mga ati-atihan performers.

VIP WELCOME! Talagang ispesyal ang salubong sa mga Pinoy abroad dahil si Presidente Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, GM Alfonso Cusi ng NAIA at DOT Secretary Ace Durano mismo ang sumalubong sa kanila noong Disyembre 18.

WELCOME HOME KABALIKAT! Kinamusta nina PGMA, OWWA Admin. Nito Roque, DOLE Usec. Danilo Cruz ang mga Pinoy na umuwi para sa Pasko noong Disyembre 18.

BASTA OFW DRIVER, OK NA FAMILY PROVIDER. Masayang tinanggap ni Roderick de Guzman mula kay PGMA ang isang jeepney mula sa OWWA.

GLOBE TELECOM
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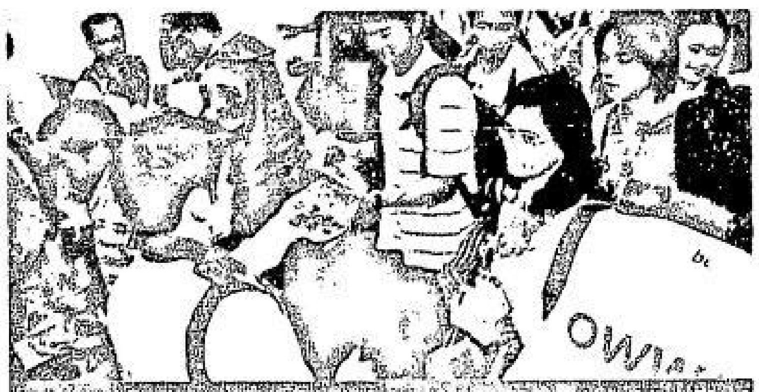
25,000.00

HANDOG NA SAYA PARA SA PAMILYA MULA SA GLOBE. Kitang-kita ang saya sa mga mukha ng Sales Family nang iprinesenta sa kanila ni Ryan Ricardo ng Globe ang tseke na nagkakahalagang P25,000 sa Kabalikat Christmas Salubong.

PANGKABUHAYANG PAPREMYO. Iprinesenta ni PGMA kina Armando at Ligaya Sales, mag-asawang AMAX retailer at OFW ang P25,000 mula sa Globe at trycicle mula sa PNB.

TOPSY-TURVEY. Sa pamamagitan ng participation ng Globe, nakisaya rin si Brad Turvey sa Kabalikat Christmas Salubong noong Disyembre 19.



MAAGANG PAMASKO PARA SA INYO. Nakatanggap ng regalo mula sa OWWA ang mga pamilyang Pinoy na nakasama sa ispesyal na salubong sa NAIA.

ANGHEL SA LUPA. Dahil ang lakas niyo sa Globe, nakasama si Angelica Panganiban sa mga artistang sumama sa pagsundo sa mga Pinoy.

PASKO NA KABALIKAT KO. Nagpamigay rin si Angelica Panganiban ng mga regalo sa mga bagong uwing kababayan noong Disyembre 20.

Tuloy-tuloy lang ang Merryunions ngayong Pasko. Mula pagdating ng iyong mga kamag-anak galing abroad hanggang sa muling pag-alis, nandito ang Globe, ang Kabalikat ng Pamilyang Pinoy.

Overseas Workers Welfare Administration

ang lakas mo sa Globe

Suspect in Bersamin killing says it was his first 'hit job'

By Arlyn de la Cruz
Contributor

ONE OF THE PRIME SUSPECTS in the assassination of Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. quit the Armed Forces in 1981 to try his luck as an overseas Filipino worker in Saudi Arabia.

But ex-Army M/Sgt. Rufino Panday's hopes of becoming an OFW was crushed when he became a victim of an illegal recruiter.

"I thought then that $700 is a substantial amount if converted into pesos so I took a voluntary disability discharge from the service," Panday, speaking in Tagalog, said in an interview at Camp Karingal in Quezon City, where he has been detained.

"I paid the recruiter, but he turned out to be illegal. That was why even if I had a passport I could not leave. I wasn't able to try what it was working abroad."

Panday was arrested in his house at 229 Jasmin St., Barangay Cembo, Makati City, three days after the Dec. 16 murder of Bersamin and his bodyguard outside Mt. Carmel Church in Quezon City.

The 63-year-old native of Abra has told investigators that he was told by one of those who participated in the killing of Bersamin that his province's governor, Vicente Valera, was the mastermind of the assassination.

Suspects are relatives

All the four other suspects in the Bersamin slaying are relatives of Panday.

Panday said he had been strapped for cash.

His voluntary separation from the 5th Infantry Batallion in the 1980s had led Panday to a number of jobs that included stints as a security guard, a "confidential agent" of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces (Isafp), and a "lookout" in the killing of Bersamin.

An Isafp source said that Panday, who named in the interview active generals he had worked with, was no longer in the agency's roster of agents.

Panday joined the AFP in 1974 at the height of the government campaign against Moro rebels in Sulu but claimed that he had not experienced any actual encounter with the guerrillas.

"I did administration work, I had no combat and field experience," said Panday, who was handcuffed and looked disturbed and uneasy during the interview.

First hit job

Panday also said that Bersamin's killing was his first involvement in an assassination mission. He insisted that the other suspects were known "guns for hire."

A Quezon City Police District (QCPD) officer, who was responsible for Panday's arrest, said: "Of course, he would say that he did not have experience in a gun battle because he was just a lookout."

Asked about the previous assassination missions carried out by the other participants in the Bersamin case, Panday said there were rumors but he did not ask what these were.

Panday admitted to knowing the details of the mission to assassinate Bersamin, the scheduled payoff, the middlemen, and the division of "reward money."

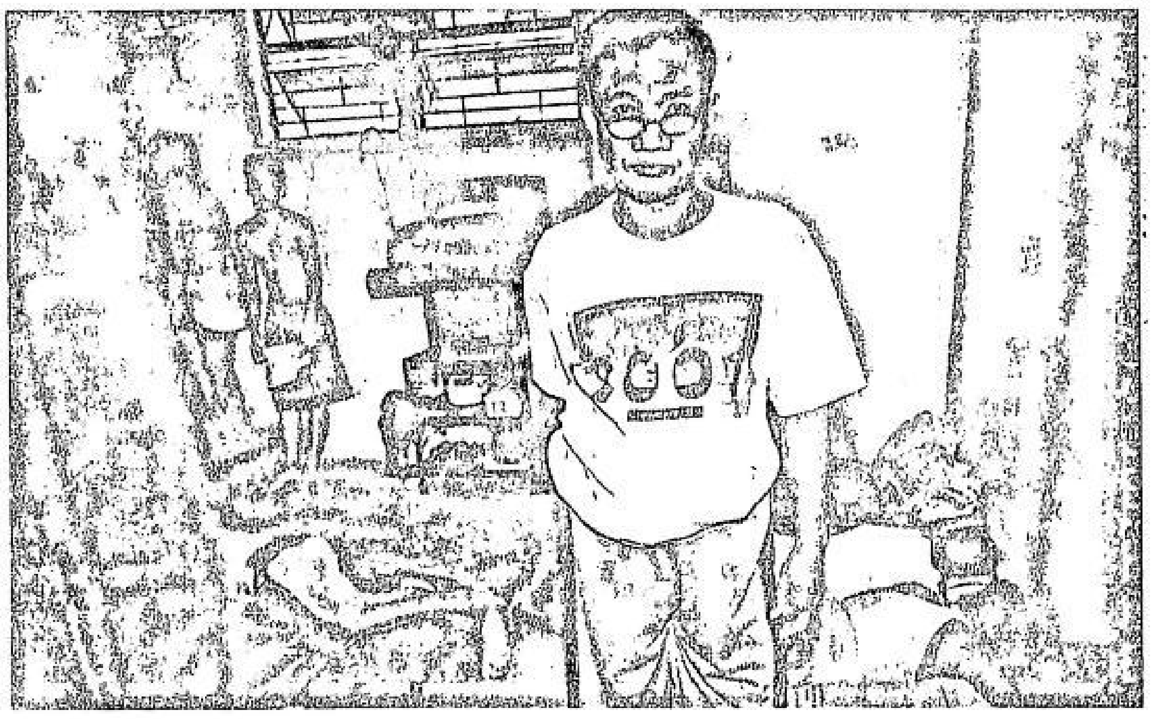
But he claimed he was the least guilty because he was "just on the side of the church, that was my role."

Panday said he had wanted to call off the "assassination job." He said he had told the others not to push through with the project. "I wanted to back out."

Under pressure

He declined to answer a question if he had moral influence on the other plotters, only saying, "I feared for my life, they might get me. I was under pressure."

Panday told investigators that he and the other suspects even met at Shaw Boulevard and Wack-Wack in Mandaluyong City at 2 p.m. on Dec. 16, before the murder. He said he was among three people on the van, the two others rode on separate motorcycles.



EX-MASTER Sgt. Rufino Panday, confessed lookout in the Dec. 16 killing of Abra Rep. Luis "Chito" Bersamin Jr., is being held at the Quezon City Police District.

JOAN BONDOC

Chief Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula, QCPD director, said Panday was withholding important details of the assassination. "Little by little, he will voluntarily divulge the details. It may take a while, but he will eventually fill in the other missing parts of the entire story."

Gatdula said Panday had earlier claimed he had no idea where the other suspects were but later revealed the possible hideout of one of his relatives—Freddie Dupo—at a Fairview subdivision in Quezon City. He said Dupo had told him that his pregnant wife was due to deliver a baby.

Dupo is a former vice mayor of La Paz, Abra, and a former member of the defunct Philippine Constabulary.

'I needed money'

Speaking in a low voice, Panday said he was one of 15 detainees at Camp Karingal. He showed respect to the police officers, addressed them as "Sir" and always said, "*Opo.*"

On Dec. 6, Panday said he was officially accepted as member of the Guardians Brotherhood headed by detained former Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan. He showed his fresh tattoo marks symbolizing membership in the brotherhood in between his forefingers.

"We are for peace and for the coming May 2007 elections," said Panday.

He said his conscience was bothered by the mission to execute Bersamin, but he also needed the P100,000 promised to him for his participation in the killing of the congressman.

"I was under pressure. I needed money. I didn't have a job." he said.

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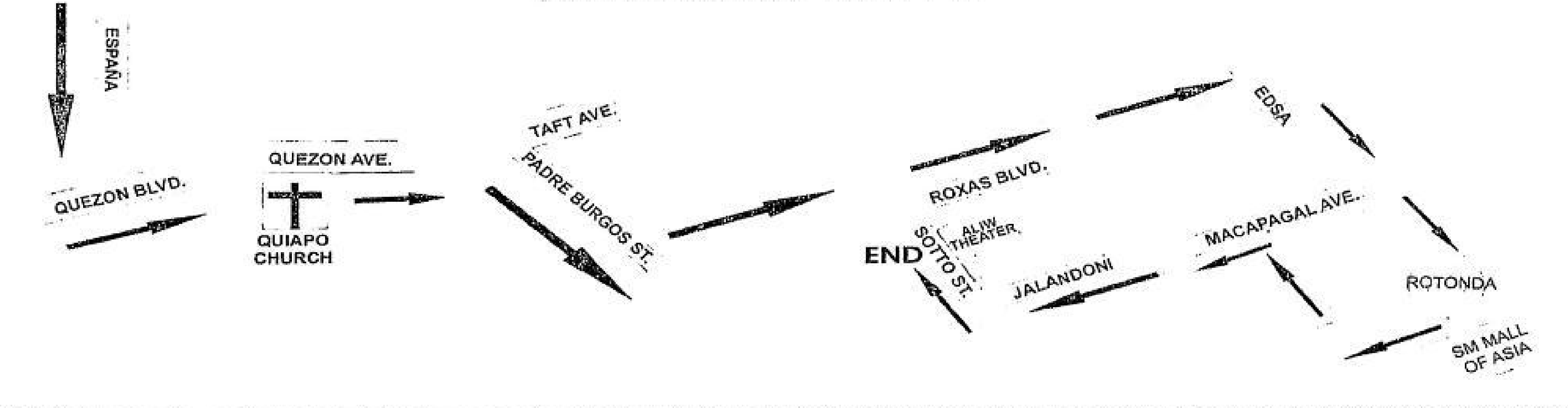

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Filipinos want change, but many distrust GMA

MANY FILIPINOS BELIEVE THE CONSTITUTION must be changed, but they do not trust President Macapagal-Arroyo to do the job, analysts say.

Ms Arroyo and her allies have also done a bad job selling constitutional reform to the country, according to analysts.

Many Filipinos see the campaign as simply an attempt by Ms Arroyo to extend her stay in office well after her term expires in 2010.

"I don't think anyone denies the fact we must reform our Constitution and the way our politicians are elected," says Benjamin Tolosa, a political scientist with the Ateneo de Manila University.

"The only problem is no one trusts the President to do it."

For over a year now the question of Charter change (Cha-cha) has dominated much of the political debate in the country.

Ms Arroyo has strongly defended her position saying, a parliamentary form of government with one chamber would be more effective at enacting reforms and legislative programs than the current method of governance. The existing approach involves a US-style presidential system with a House of Representatives and a Senate.

Ms Arroyo has argued that the Constitution is no longer attuned to the globalized, market-based economy, gives too much power to the judiciary and prevents foreign participation in key sectors. It also gives the president a single six-year term, which many see as the real reason for Ms Arroyo's push.

"When the Constitution was drafted in 1987, following the fall of dictator Ferdinand Marcos, it was done with the intention of making it difficult to have another strong, one-man rule," says Cleo Calimbahin of the political science department at the University of Asia and Pacific.

In recent months, Ms Arroyo and her House allies have been forced to make a series of embarrassing U-turns in trying to get constitutional change off the ground.

Last week, she was forced to shelve plans for what would have been a House-only constitutional assembly (Con-ass) due to fears of massive street protests organized by the dominant Catholic Church and left-wing groups.

Some commentators have suggested the real reason for canceling the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean) summit in Cebu City earlier this month had more to do with the political situation in Manila than with bad weather or threats of a terrorist attack.

Last Sunday, the powerful Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) went ahead with a planned rally against Charter change. But the CBCP turned it into a "Thanksgiving Mass," believing Ms Arroyo would no longer go ahead with her plans to amend the Constitution.

The rally drew between 15,000 and 50,000, well short of the 500,000 the Church had hoped to draw.

Last Tuesday, however, Ms Arroyo said in a speech before the Asian Development Bank that constitutional change was not dead but back on the agenda. Ms Arroyo did not elaborate what form or shape it will take.

"She says one thing and does another," Tolosa says. "But the problem we have in this country runs much deeper than trust of the President . . . the people have lost faith in their political leaders right across the board." Clarita Carlos, a political scientist with the University of the Philippines, agrees: "The people are physically and emotionally tired of politics ... hence the low turnout on Sunday."

Opinion polls show Ms Arroyo's popularity remains low. A recent survey by the Social Weather Stations even showed eroding support in Central Visayas, one of Ms Arroyo's bailiwicks.

"(Ms) Arroyo has lost a great deal of credibility in the eyes of ordinary Filipinos. That is why they don't trust her tinkering with the Constitution," Carlos says.

She says questions still remain over the way Ms Arroyo first came to power following the overthrow of popularly elected Joseph Estrada in 2001, and her election victory in 2004, which the opposition claims she stole with the help of the military.

Ms Arroyo has faced down a mutiny by junior officers in 2003, two impeachment attempts and a failed coup in February.

"She is destined to muddle through the next three years as a lame duck president whose only objective is political survival," Carlos says.

AFP

62 percent of Pinoys see happy Christmas

DESPITE THE DESTRUCTIVE TYPHOONS, widespread killings and political unrest this year, three out of five Filipinos are looking forward to a happy Christmas, according to the latest survey of the Social Weather Stations.

The percentage of Filipinos expecting a happy Christmas (62 percent) was the same as last year, the SWS said.

Expectations of a happy Christmas have been on the downtrend since 2002. Four years ago, 82 percent of Filipinos said they looked forward to a happy Christmas. Only 77 percent in 2003 and 64 percent in 2004 shared the same sentiment.

In the latest survey, a total of 1,200 respondents from all over the country were asked: "*Sa pangkalahatan, masasabi po ba ninyo na ang inyong Pasko ngayong taon ay magiging masaya, malungkot, hindi masaya at hindi rin malungkot* (In general, can you say that your Christmas this year is happy, sad, or neither happy nor sad)?"

Only 7 percent this year said they were anticipating a sad Christmas, while 29 percent said they were neither happy nor sad.

Among the respondents expecting a happy Christmas, most are in Mindanao (70 percent of the area), followed by the rest of Luzon (65 percent), Visayas (60 percent) and Metro Manila (45 percent).

Sixty-nine percent of respondents from the A, B, and C classes said they anticipated a happy Christmas, compared to 62 percent from the D class and 58 percent from E class.

Asked what they were most thankful for in life, 41 percent of the respondents answered "good health." This was followed by the 28 percent who said they were thankful for "being alive."

These were also the two most popular reasons cited in the 2003 survey. Other reasons cited were "being able to cope with day-to-day living," "having food on the table," better job/business, and blessings.

The latest survey had a margin of error of plus and minus 3 percentage points. *Lawrence de Guzman, Inquirer Research*

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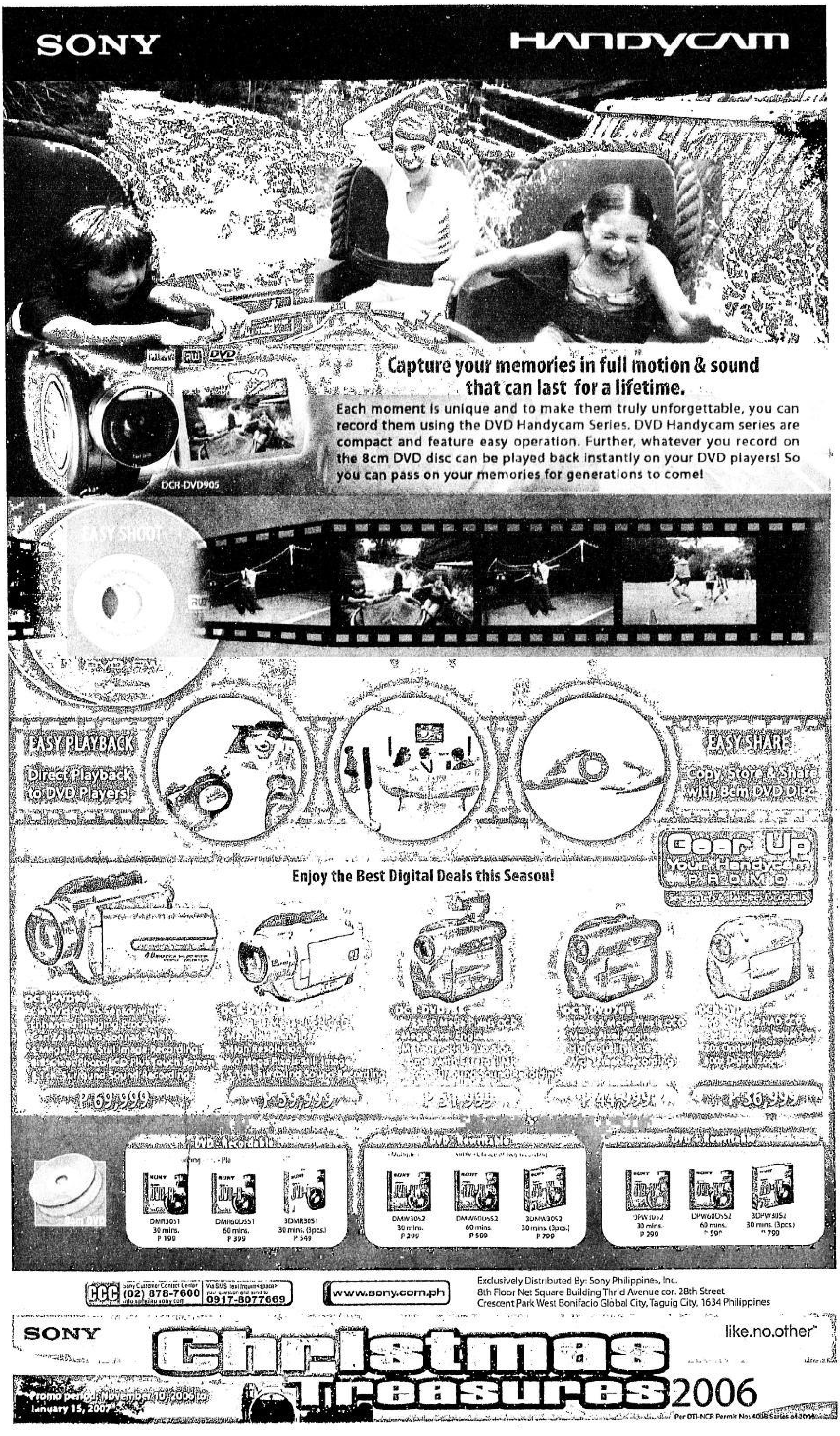
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Christmas spirit missing in Bangued

By Frank Cimatu and Leoncio Balbin Jr.
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BANGUED, ABRA—THE CHRISTmas spirit in this provincial capital was noticeably absent yesterday, a week after the slaying of Abra Rep. Luis "Chito" Bersamin Jr.

The capitol grounds were empty, except for five tired policemen in full battle gear.

A star sign is on top of the capitol building and yellow ribbons symbolizing rays streaming down from it. Santa Claus figures are hung on the side of the desolate plaza.

But Charrie Bersamin, the slain lawmaker's eldest daughter, said the family would try to cheer up despite the tragedy.

"We will be spending Christmas with [my father] here," said Charrie. "We will try to keep our spirits up but we hope this will be the last [death]."

"Why does he have to be the sacrificial lamb?" she asked.

But Roselle Ortega, a barangay councilor of San Juan here, says this could be the happiest Christmas for Abra. She says the Dec. 16 slaying in Quezon City could finally expose the complicity of top officials in the province in the violence that has plagued Abra politics for years.

'A brighter future'

"This is our chance to have a brighter future ahead of us," said Ortega, the wife of SPO1 Adelfo Ortega, the policeman who was killed with Bersamin.

Ortega will be buried on Dec. 29, two days after Bersamin's burial.

On the electric posts around Bangued are pasted coupon bond-sized flyers with a photocopied picture of Bersamin sprawled and bloodied on the ground. The flyers carry the statement: "Justice for Rep. Chito Bersamin."

A huge poster of a somber Bersamin, with the statement "To serve well my people is my mission in life," welcomes visitors as they enter the town.

The poster is near the just-completed Sinalang Bridge that was supposed to be inaugurated by President Macapagal Arroyo during her Christmas holiday break in the Cordillera.

One mastermind

On the right side of the Bersamins' ancestral house is a huge black streamer that said: "Justice for Cong. Luis Chito Bersamin, Mayor El Bernos, Mayor Boyet Benwaren & Mayor Jose Segundo. *Maymaysa ti Makin Aramid Daguita* (Only one masterminded these killings)."

La Paz Mayor Marc Ysrael Bernos, said to be the most promising foe of Abra Gov. Vicente Valera, was killed in his hometown on Jan. 13. Tineg Mayor Clarence Benwaren was gunned down while attending a wedding in Laguna in October 2002. Both Bernos and Benwaren were Valera allies who later turned oppositionists.

Tubo Mayor Jose Segundo, a faith healer, was also shot and killed in December 2001 in his hometown but communist rebels were blamed for his death.

That streamer and the smaller flyers were posted and distributed before Friday's press conference where Rufino Panday, one of the five suspects in the murder of Bersamin and his bodyguard, tagged Valera as the one who allegedly ordered Bersamin's killing.

"When I saw the throng of people meeting [Bersamin's] casket when he arrived here, I know how truly the people here really loved him," said Charrie.

The 'great unmentionable'

Valera here is the "great unmentionable," with none of the residents interviewed by the INQUIRER saying his name, referring only to "him" or "that."

A BLACK streamer in memory of slain Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. is hung at the provincial capitol in Abra. LEONCIO BALBIN/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

SPO4 Mario Pangilinan said Bersamin and Valera had not been talking to each other since the 2001 elections.

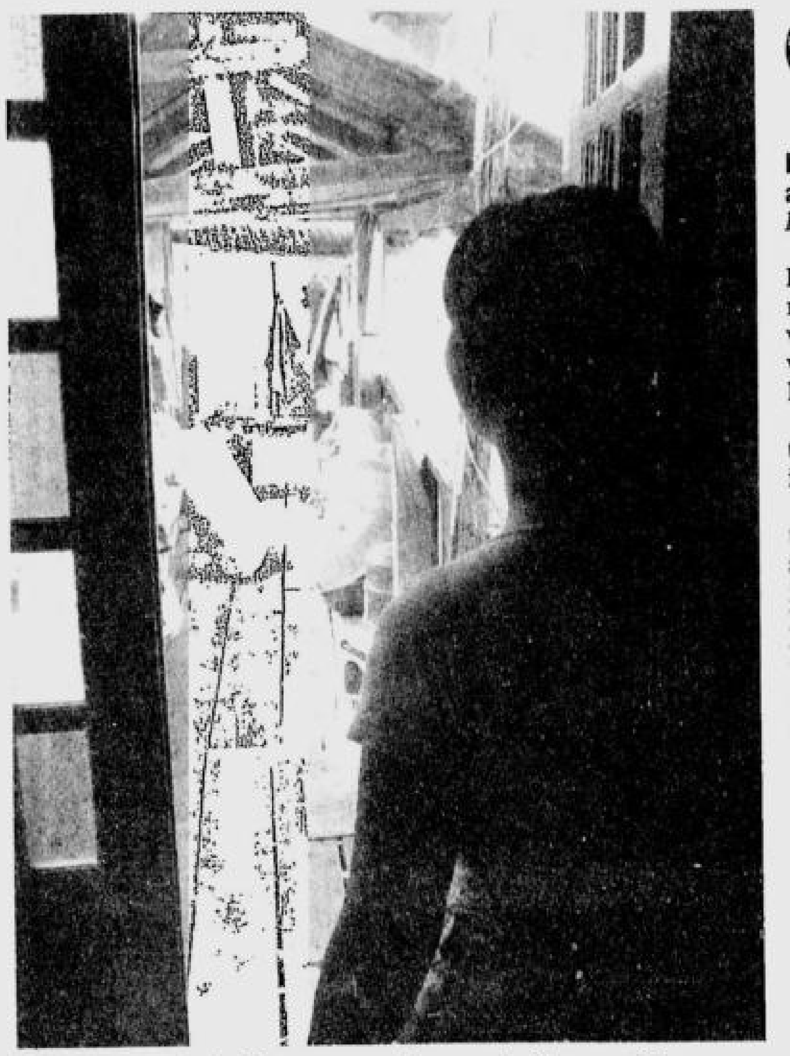
Charrie said her father had always been the one agreeing to a compromise while Valera was the one always putting him on the spot.

Lately, she said, Valera had been reminding her father about a "covenant" they signed where Bersamin would have to step down as representative and run for mayor of Bangued instead.

"All my father was asking them (Valeras) was for one more term. He also told the President that he would be running for governor," she said.

"When they killed [Board Member] James Bersamin, I told him, 'That is a warning to you being a Bersamin.' We had an exchange of words. But he insisted [on not having many bodyguards]. He sometimes took the back of a tricycle here in Abra," Charrie said.

Pangilinan, who is Bersamin's security aide here, said the lawmaker did not want him being seen with a bodyguard. "He always said that he had no enemies," Pangilinan said.



A SMALL wooden bridge connects the ancestral houses of the families of slain Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. and Abra Gov. Vicente Valera in the capital town of Bangued. A symbol of friendship of the top two politicians of Abra, the bridge would be closed whenever a rift between them erupts. LEONCIO BALBIN JR./INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Bridge connecting Valera, Bersamin houses closed

By Frank Cimatu
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BANGUED, ABRA—"THE BRIDGE has fallen down," said lawyer Alfredo Villamor, uncle of slain Abra Rep. Luis "Chito" Bersamin Jr.

Villamor was referring to the wooden bridge connecting the ancestral houses of Gov. Vicente Valera and Bersamin behind the provincial capitol.

The Valeras' ancestral house actually belonged to Valera's grandfather, Quintin Paredes, while that of Bersamin's originally belonged to his father, Dr. Luis Bersamin Sr.

The Valeras' house retained its wooden structure while the Bersamin house added a third floor and a concrete facade facing the road. Both were painted in the same cream color.

The wooden bridge is the symbol of the friendship between the two families.

"Years ago, when the two (Valera and Bersamin) quarreled, the bridge was closed. Then it opened again," Villamor said.

"Yesterday (Friday), it was closed again," said one of the helpers in the Bersamin household, referring to the time when Valera was tagged the financier in the killing of Bersamin.

Better torn down

"I wished that they would just tear down the bridge and use it as charcoal," said Villamor in Ilocano.

Valera's parents and their helpers are staying in the house.

In front of the house is a tarpaulin showing Valera's image riding a white horse, his representative pose.

After the announcement of Valera's supposed involvement in Bersamin's murder, police raided the governor's house in Emerald Hills here and the houses of at least two mayors closely associated with and his bodyguards.

In the Bersamin house's gate is a streamer, with the statement "Justice to Cong. Chito Bersamin."

And although Valera's house appears to be vacant, that of Bersamin has a steady stream of people expressing their condolences.

Prominent families

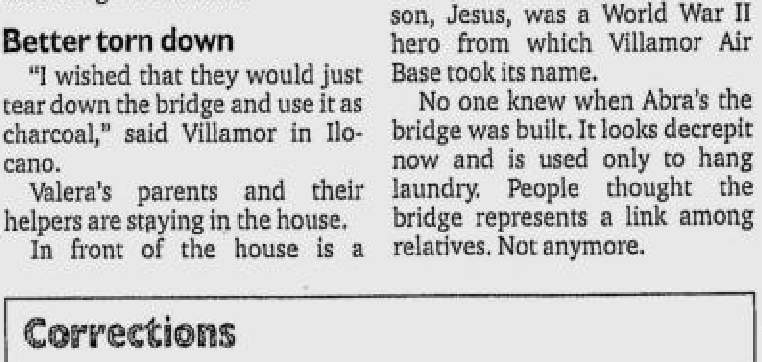
It was a sad state of affairs for the two most prominent families in Abra.

Valera's grandfather, Quintin Paredes, who was born here in 1884, had a long career in statesmanship. He was speaker of the House of Representatives and was also a senator.

Juan Villamor, a great grandfather of Bersamin, was the first governor of Abra. Villamor's cousin, Ignacio Villamor, was the first Filipino president of the University of the Philippines and his son, Jesus, was a World War II hero from which Villamor Air Base took its name.

No one knew when Abra's the bridge was built. It looks decrepit now and is used only to hang laundry. People thought the bridge represents a link among relatives. Not anymore.

Corrections



IN THE DEC. 23 ISSUE, a caption of a front-page photo misstated the name of the woman who was crying beside the casket of Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. The grieving woman is Violeta Valera, the mother of Abra Gov. Vicente Valera—not the mother of Bersamin. Rosario Bersamin, the mother of the slain congressman, died in 1996.

* * *

IN THE DEC. 22 ISSUE, a front-page article—"Muslim celebration starts on Dec. 25"—misstated the date of this year's Eid ul-Adha, a major Muslim feast. Following the lunar calendar and the actual sighting of the crescent moon, Muslims in the Philippines as well as in many parts of the world will celebrate the feast on Dec. 31—not Dec. 25.

* * *

IN THE DEC. 21 ISSUE, a Metro Manila Film Festival guide on Page E1 of the Entertainment section misstated the name of one of the actors in the film, "Zsazsa Zaturnnah Ze Moveeh." The correct name of the actor in the film is Christian Vasquez — not Bautista.

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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Abra gov cries frame-up

From page A1

Panday named three of the alleged assassins, all at large—Freddie Dupo, Dominador Barbosa and Sonny Taculao. The fifth man has not been identified. Barbosa was described as the gunman and Taculao the driver of the getaway motorcycle. The rest were inside a van.

On Friday, Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon announced that Panday had revealed to investigators that Dupo, a former Philippine Constabulary member and ex-vice mayor of the Abra town of La Paz, had implicated Valera in the killings.

Panday disclosed that Dupo had told him that "a politician" from Abra had promised P5 million for the assassination of Bersamin and that when Panday had pressed Dupo for details Dupo had told him the mastermind was Valera, according to Calderon.

'Political allies'

Saying he and the slain lawmaker were actually "political allies," Valera urged the PNP to look into other angles other than politics.

"In fact, they should look at a business angle, old grudges, perhaps even family relations," he said, when asked if he himself could offer a theory.

Valera said he did not know Panday. But he admitted that Dupo was "a party-mate identified with me" in the 2004 elections. He said he had lost contact with Dupo since Dupo survived an ambush last year and went into hiding.

Asked why he had not shown up at Bersamin's funeral if indeed there were no animosities between them, Valera said he had been planning to but was advised by his siblings not to go because they heard "bad things being said about me," especially by the lawmaker's children.

"We (Bersamin and I) practically cradled his children together but somehow their mind had been poisoned into believing that I have something to do with this, which is probably why they said those things," he explained in Filipino.

Wedding guests

Valera and his wife Ma. Zita were guests in the wedding but left the church 30 minutes before the shooting, according to police investigators who had talked with the lawmakers' relatives.

In yesterday's interview, Valera conceded that, based on warnings he got from his siblings and supporters in Abra, Bersamin's children "have said bad things about me," that's why he had not gone to the congressman's wake.

He insisted that he was in the capital for the past few days, not to "disappear" but to arrange his family's annual holiday get-together—there are 17 siblings. This has been traditionally held in Metro Manila.

Aside from being political allies, he said he and Bersamin were "close relatives."

"My very own mother Violeta was the one who helped the Bersamin clan in the funeral arrangements of the congressman in Bangued," Valera said.

Valera also sought to explain why he left the church early. He said that his wife had suggested that they go to the reception at New World Hotel in Makati ahead of the big crowd. The usual post-wedding pictorials were still going on when the couple left the church, he said.

Valera said he later heard about the shooting while on the way to the hotel.

Exchanging jokes

Before the wedding started, he and Bersamin were even exchanging jokes about how they have gained weight, Valera recalled.

"Chito and I practically grew up under the same roof. (Ours) were probably the only houses in the Philippines whose windows were connected by a bridge. That wooden bridge was built by our ancestors and it was already there when we were both born," Valera said. *(See story on this page.)*

He said their forebears—the Puruganans and the Paredeses—were relatives, and that he and Bersamin were friends since childhood and through their college years.

Valera also questioned the search warrant that was cited as basis by the PNP's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in raiding his house in Bangued on Friday, where he allegedly kept high-power firearms. The warrant had been issued by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court.

"We all know that a search warrant should be issued in relation to an existing case," said Valera, who is also a lawyer. "The search conducted in my home was not related to the investigation surrounding the death of the congressman."

Unaware of political plans

Told of reports that Bersamin was planning to contest the gubernatorial post in Abra next year, Valera said: "That's the first time I heard of that. In fact, before the incident, I heard that he's been telling the mayors that 'we need to talk with the governor about our slate next year.'"

Valera also showed the INQUIRER a copy of a "Covenant of Unity" which he, his wife and Bersamin signed in January 2004 wherein they made the following vows: That Mayor Valera would not contest the lone congressional district of Abra in the May elections of that year "upon request" by Bersamin; That she will support Bersamin's plan to run for mayor of Bangued "after the elections of 2004" or after he had served a term as congressman.

Bersamin, in turn, would support Mayor Valera's plans to run for Congress after the 2004 polls, according to the document.

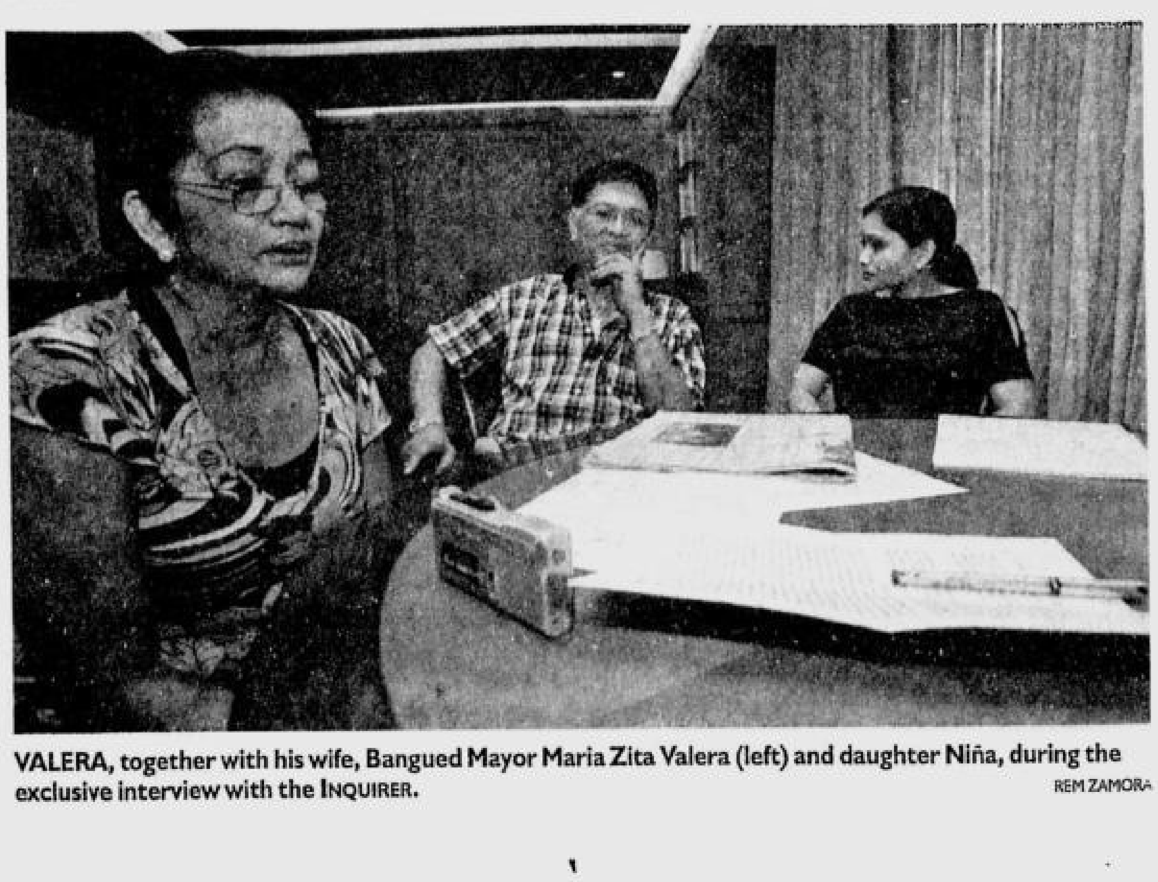
75-percent breakthrough

Also yesterday, Calderon told reporters that investigators had scored a "75-percent breakthrough" in the case but that "we're still gathering more evidence." He made the statement after he was briefed by Quezon City police chief Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula.

Police have filed two counts of murder against Panday, Dupo, Barbosa and Taculao and the unidentified fifth person.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said no administrative sanctions would be lodged against Valera unless a formal complaint was brought against him. "I can't rely on newspaper reports," Puno said.

With reports from Dona Z. Pazzibugan and Norman Bordadora



VALERA, together with his wife, Bangued Mayor Maria Zita Valera (left) and daughter Niña, during the exclusive interview with the INQUIRER. REM ZAMORA

Bunye says canceled war games a setback ...

From page A1

ment," the party-list representative said.

Leave it to the court

In an interview with the state-run Radyo ng Bayan, Bunye pointed out that Smith's case had been elevated to the Court of Appeals.

"What is important is to have an early resolution. We leave that to the sound judgment of the [appellate court], but [it] should consider our international commitment," he said.

Asked if he was aware of reports that Fallon had pulled out US troops helping in relief operations in typhoon-devastated areas in Bicol due to concerns over the legal rights of American soldiers, Bunye said: "We have no information on this, but we will not be surprised if that will be their action. But we are hoping that we will resolve this the soonest within the judicial system."

Malacañang "respects" the US government's decision to cancel the joint military training exercises and "understands" its concern over the custody issue, he said in a statement issued later in the day.

"The cancellation of these exercises is a setback to our military modernization program, the inter-operability of Philippine and US forces, and the strategic alliance of both countries grounded on time-honored ties over more than a century," Bunye said, adding:

"We hope that the exercises can be put back on track as soon as possible."

Commitment

Bunye also said the Philippine government was "firmly committed to the VFA" and was "undertaking all means to have Smith transferred to US custody soonest under our judicial processes."

"The US government and the American people surely understand the vagaries inherent in the relationship between the executive branch and the courts under the democratic separation of powers," he said.

"We are not making excuses for the immediate noncompliance with the VFA, but we have to seek relief through the justice system that defines the rule of law," he said.

Bunye also said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo had been ordered to relay this message to their US counterparts and other concerned officials.

Smith has been held at the Makati City Jail since Dec. 4, when Makati Judge Benjamin Pozon convicted him of raping "Nicole" at the Subic Bay Freeport on Nov. 1, 2005.

The soldier requested that he be returned to US custody for the duration of the appeal process, based on the provisions of the VFA. But Pozon, citing the same agreement, denied the request.

Smith's lawyers took his case to the appellate court, but it said it must review Pozon's commitment order before making a decision.

The US Embassy maintains that Smith's continued incarceration at the Makati City Jail is in violation of the VFA. The Philippines' Departments of Justice and Foreign Affairs have registered concurrence with the US position.

'Small problem'

Sulu Gov. Benjamin Loong said he was saddened by the scrapping of next year's war games because of "a small problem," and expressed fear that the projects being undertaken in his province under the Balikatan would be jeopardized.

Loong said Sulu had been benefiting from the Balikatan in terms of development projects, including classrooms, bridges and roads.

"It is so sad because [this is] a small problem. For me, their reaction should not be like that. But we cannot do anything if that is their decision," he said.

Loong suggested that the Philippine government pardon Smith as a means of convincing the US government to change its mind on the cancellation of Balikatan.

"[When] we have some overseas Filipino workers at stake in other countries, we always diplomatically try to get them back home for humanitarian reasons. And several times, our requests were granted. Why not return this favor? I hope we have this attitude of reciprocity," the governor said.

But Matthew Lussenhop, information officer of the US Embassy in Manila, explained that only Balikatan 2007 had been cancelled and that this year's military exercise, including its humanitarian component, would proceed as scheduled.

"The United States has no plans to suspend financial and development assistance," he said.

Lussenhop said projects being undertaken by US forces in Sulu and in other parts of Mindanao would be implemented until completion.

"We expect the humanitarian and civil military projects to continue in Mindanao," he said.

'If we cave in...'

Senator Lacson said that while the executive branch was doing its part to get a favorable judicial interpretation of the VFA provision on custody, the US government should respect the workings of the Philippine justice system.

"This undesirable incident should serve as a test to the national leadership. If we cave in to this threat, we have no business talking about self-respect and love of country," he said.

According to Hataman, Smith's case is not covered by the VFA.

"The US government should respect the judicial system of a democratic country like ours, which has been patterned after theirs. They should respect the maturity of the democracy here," he said.

He also urged the national leadership to "look for allies that are supportive and respectful of our laws and policy."

'Good thing'

The militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, through its secretary general Renato Reyes Jr., said the cancelation of the Balikatan was a welcome development.

"We welcome [it]. It is a good thing. It is not something the administration should be apprehensive about. We are not on the losing end here," Reyes said.

"For once, our country can proudly stand up to encroachments on our territory and legal system," he said.

Bayan has repeatedly criticized the annual war games as a violation of Philippine sovereignty.

According to Reyes, the scrapping of the Balikatan showed how US authorities are using the VFA "as a legal shield for US troops" in the country.

"It is one of the foundations of continued US military presence and intervention," he said. "You do away with the VFA and you have a better chance of stopping US military intervention in the country."

Reyes also said the Philippine government, including the judiciary, should pay more attention to the legal issues involving Smith's rape case and the VFA "than give in to pressure tactics being employed by the US government."

"The US government may soon threaten to reduce military aid ... [It] will use diplomatic pressure to restore its once untouchable status in the country," he said.

In a report, Reuters said the US government had given nearly $500 million in military aid to the Philippines since 2000 and sent hundreds of advisers to train local troops fight Moro insurgents. *Reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Cynthia D. Balana and Norman Bordadora in Manila; Julie S. Alipala and Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao*

HK organ donor brings hope to 7 patients

From page A1

"[My son] is very great. Even though he's left us ... we can still hear him breathe, and his heart beat. He's already become an angel," she said.

Doctors hailed Miu's case as an example to others in Hong Kong, where organ donorship is traditionally frowned upon given the Chinese belief in keeping bodies whole to allow the deceased to rest in heavenly peace.

"This is a very encouraging event ... We're desperately in need of organs," said Dr. Choi Kin, president of the Hong Kong Medical Association.

Last year, only 4.2 of every million people in Hong Kong donated organs to science upon dying, around 5 times less than in the United States, according to the Apple Daily. *Reuters*

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K. LUMPUR $100 | NAGOYA $320 | LAX/HNL $577
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BKK VIA PAL $138
TOUR PACKAGES
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HKG + SHENZHEN + MACAU W/ DISNEY $[illegible]
K. LUMPUR+GENTING+SUNWAY LAGOON $378
3D/2N KOTA KINABALU $ 99 | 3D/2N MACAU PKG. $225
4D/3N HKG + SZN $188 | 3D/2N BRUNEI PKG. $303
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American volunteers bring cheer to evacuees

From page A1

tims in Padang, she said that like the children of Bicol, she, too, waded through waist-deep flood waters.

Neck-deep in mud

However, her experience was nothing compared to the stories of other children, particularly that of Almera. The 10-year-old who lost everyone save for her mother, tumbled under torrents of sand and rocks and when she was finally rescued, her whole body, except for her head, was buried in mud.

"They are too young to experience such a great disaster and it was really hard for them to understand everything," Campbell said of the young survivors.

Campbell was a reporter for The New York Times until she decided to leave her job after the 9/11 attacks in 2001.

"I lived near ground zero. After the attacks, I decided to volunteer for the Peace Corps. I wanted to show people in the world what Americans are really like because after 9/11, people had the impression that Americans are bad, selfish and greedy," she said.

She added that most of them in the Peace Corps were not rich. Most came from the middle class and received no salaries, except for a small living allowance.

"I wanted to reach out to people. I wanted to volunteer and do it full-time," Campbell said.

Children's party

Enrico Baldo, 19, city president of the PYAP, said children smiled all throughout the early Christmas party which lasted more than two hours.

"This disaster created unity among the city's youth. We were brought together to do whatever we can for the typhoon victims," Baldo said.

"It was my first time to reach out in the midst of a disaster and in spite of the language barrier, I could discern resilience and courage among the children," Kochersberger said.

She was happy to see the youth working together preparing food and organizing the program. Even young survivors from Padang helped in the party preparations.

Fulfilling

"This is one of the most fulfilling things I've ever done—giving my time for the children. They need to be kids and be given opportunities to express themselves," Kochersberger said.

She narrated that on her first day in the evacuation center, she met a 6-year-old boy who sat quietly in a chair and would sometimes lash out at other children.

"With the little Filipino I knew, I asked what was bothering him," Kochersberger said.

The boy answered that he was sad because his mother and sister were in the hospital, being treated for injuries.

"He was quite isolated and would hurt other children—probably because of post-traumatic stress. We got him involved in activities and he learned to play with other children," she said.

Sad to leave

Kochersberger said she was deeply inspired by her experience in Albay and would be sad to go when her 21-month term ends soon.

The Peace Corps is an independent federal agency of the United States.

More than 187,000 people have served in 139 countries with the Peace Corps since it was established in 1961.

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Santa's approval rating only Bush could dream about

From page A1

AP-AOL News poll.

That's an approval rating that President George W. Bush and most lawmakers in Congress could only dream about these days.

And despite the multiethnic nature of the country, more than 60 percent of those with children at home consider Santa important in their holiday celebrations now.

Among the findings:

- Santa is important to 60 percent of Catholics, 51 percent of those without a religious affiliation, and 47 percent of Protestants, when households both with and without children are surveyed.
- But nearly half (47 percent) of the respondents say Santa detracts from the religious significance of Christmas; over one-third (36 percent) say he enhances the religious nature of the holiday.
- Ninety-one percent of whites believe in Santa as a child; 72 percent of minorities do.
- An overwhelming majority, across nearly all backgrounds and religious beliefs, say they believe in angels—81 percent. Belief in angels is shared by 57 percent of those who say they have no religious affiliation. Nearly all white evangelical Christians, 97 percent, share this belief.

Tradition survives

Somehow, the Santa Claus tradition has survived all that challenges tradition.

Carl Anderson studied Santa beliefs as a doctoral student 20 years ago, looking at the phenomenon then and a century earlier. A child psychologist with a long, real beard, he's since put in 18 Christmases at the Dallas NorthPark Center absorbing the wide-eyed wishes of little ones.

So what's new, Santa?

Remarkably, according to Anderson, not much. The set of beliefs appears to have remained largely intact since the topic was studied in the late 1800s.

Few kids have challenged him over the years, Anderson says. When one little girl did so, tentatively, this week, he did what psychologists always seem to do. He answered by asking a question.

"Santa, some people are saying they don't believe in you," the little girl told Anderson shyly.

"Well, what do you say to them?"

"I tell them they haven't met you."

Case closed, for now.

In the poll, 8 was the average age for a child's Santa reality check. Fifteen percent hung on to their belief over age 10. The telephone poll of 1,000 adults was taken Dec. 12-14 by Ipsos, an international polling firm. It has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Reality check

Anderson shared his historical expertise with an elite group this summer in Missouri, addressing the international convention of the Amalgamated Order of Real Bearded Santas.

At the Dallas mall, he knows the faces looking up at him will be clouded by questions before long. But for many kids, the letdown also comes with an upside.

"They see themselves as more grown up," he said through that beard. "They're on the other side now."

Study says optimists outliving pessimists

From page A1

On average, the most pessimistic study participants were 42 percent more likely to die of any cause than the most positive participants, according to findings published in the Mayo Clinic Proceedings medical journal.

The results echo those of a number of past studies on personality factors and health, including research that has linked optimism to longer life.

One study of elderly adults found that those with a positive view of the future were less likely than pessimists to die over the next decade—regardless of their health at the start of the study.

The current findings could be explained by any number of factors, according to the study authors, led by Dr. Beverly H. Brummett of Duke University Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina.

For example, these researchers say, optimists are less likely to suffer from depression than are pessimists, which could, in turn, affect their physical health. They may also maintain a healthier lifestyle, paying more attention to their diet and exercise habits.

Only temporary

These latest findings are based on a 40-year follow-up of 6,958 men and women who entered the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill in the mid-1960s. At the time, they took a standard personality test that gauges a person's tendency to be optimistic or pessimistic.

In general, optimists believe negative events are only temporary and don't let them affect their overall attitude about themselves and the world.

Pessimists, in contrast, take such events to heart, often blaming themselves and believing that the bad times will last forever.

In this study, 1,630 were deemed pessimists and 923 optimists, while most were judged to be somewhere between a pure optimist or pessimist.

Difficult to change

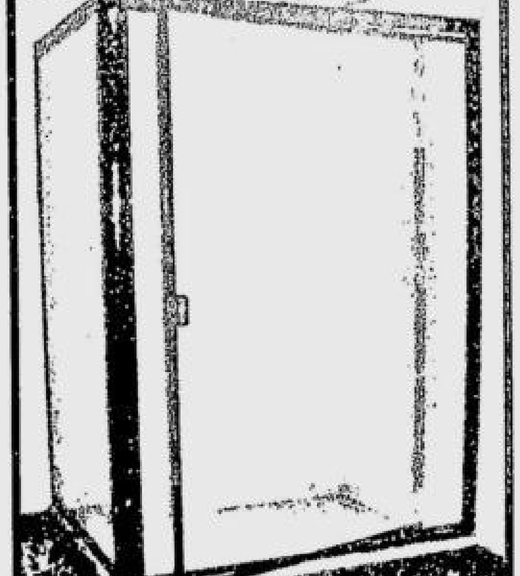
If pessimism is a risk factor for premature death, that begs the question of whether anything can be done about it.

It is difficult to change the basic constructs of your personality, according to Brummett.

However, she adds, "there are many aspects of personality that can be modified to a certain degree if an individual is motivated to do so."

For example, Brummett says, people with a hostile temperament—a trait linked to heart disease and premature death—may be able to change their ways with the help of anger management therapy.

On the other side of the spectrum, people might try injecting some positivity into their lives. As an example, Brummett points to meditation, which, according to some research, may boost positive emotions. *Reuters*



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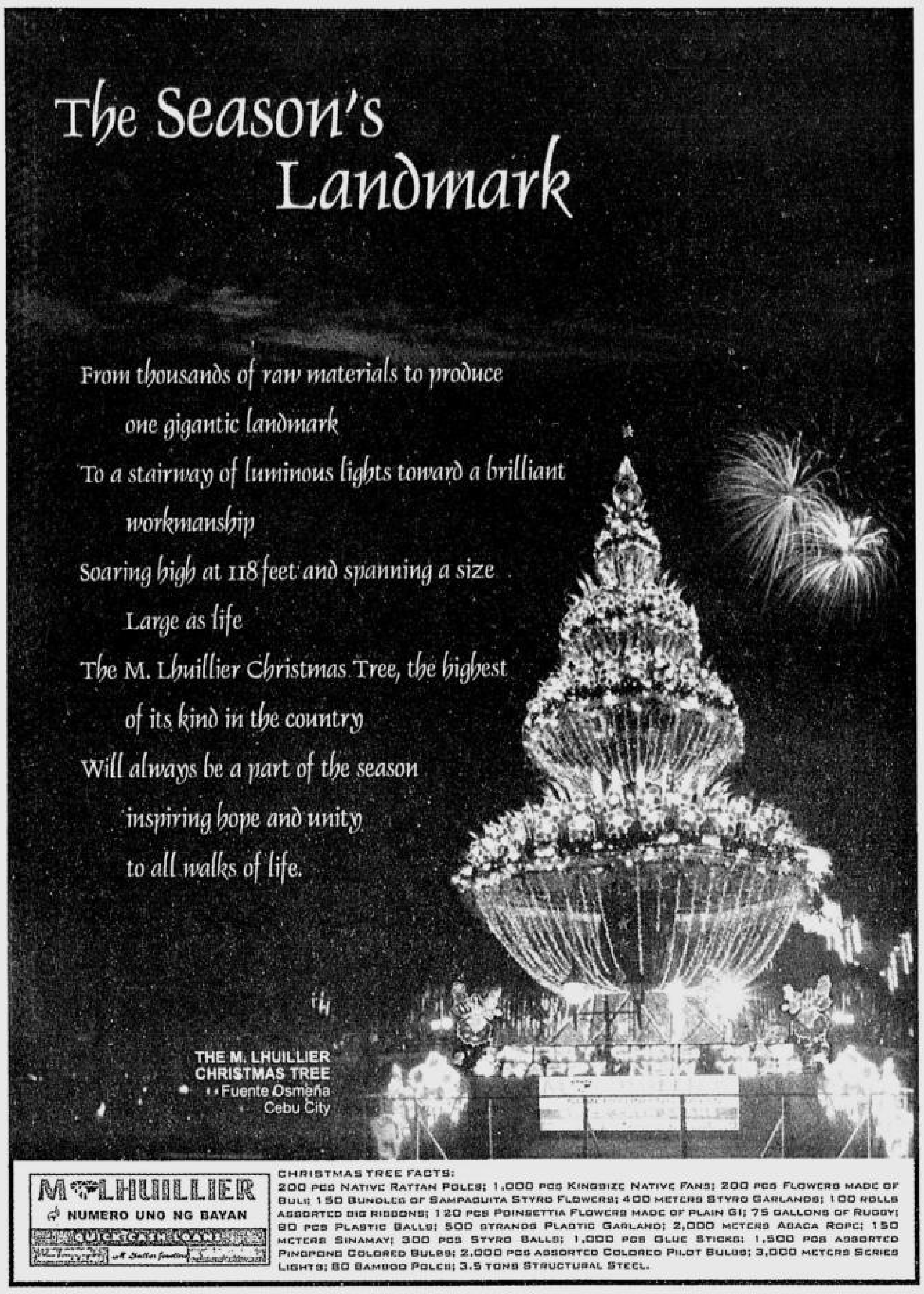
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DAVAO police continue to crackdown on firecrackers to keep the city firecracker-free even on New Year's Day. Police recently confiscated various firecrackers and other pyrotechnic products. The ban has kept Davao City quiet on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. The enforcement of the ban is as strict as that on the ban on smoking.

BING GONZALES/
INQUIRER MINDANAO

Bulacan firecrackers light up Europe skies

By Carmela Reyes
Inquirer Central Luzon

SAN RAFAEL, BULACAN—FIRECRACKERS AND pyrotechnic products made in Bulacan are lighting up the skies of Europe and Micronesia.

Dragon Fireworks Inc., a manufacturer and distributor of firecracker and pyrotechnic products based in this town, has penetrated the world market since it started shipping its products abroad in August.

Joven Ong, the firm's president, said more orders from foreign customers were expected before the year ends.

"We are happy and proud to be Pinoy. Finally, we are conquering the world through our products," he said.

The feat of Ong's firm, a member of the Philippine Pyrotechnic Manufacturers and Dealers Association Inc. (PPMDAI), came as smuggled firecrackers and pyrotechnic products, especially those from China, started flooding the local market.

Ong said several foreign clients had sent him e-mails asking why the Dragon products they bought in Bulacan were not available in their countries.

This, he said, prompted him to explore the export market.

Ong said China had been supplying 80 percent of the world's demand for firecracker and pyrotechnic products.

His firm, he said, wants to target even a small percentage of the remaining 20 percent not supplied by China.

He said he tried to look at the international market after local sales suffered due to competition from smuggled Chinese products sold at lower prices.

Competing with China

Ong said manufacturers in Bulacan, the country's "firecracker capital," had been complaining about the proliferation of smuggled pyrotechnic products.

"We cannot compete with them. Our business has been adversely affected. But we prefer to conduct our business legally so we started looking at the international market," Ong said.

He warned the public not to be deceived by the cheap imported firecrackers.

He said those flooding the market were "Class C" products from China that were inferior in quality.

Ong said several firecracker-related accidents had been attributed to the use of these smuggled products.

He said Dragon products could compete with the more expensive Class A and Class B products from China.

Public warned anew: Don't explode crackers, overeat

By Christian V. Esguerra

BEFORE YOU LOAD YOUR NEW *boga* (an improvised "cannon" for firecrackers) or fill up that buffet plate, consider this warning from the Department of Health.

You won't have a merry Christmas or a happy New Year if you lose a finger or two to firecrackers, or suffer a stroke or a heart attack as a result of reckless eating.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III yesterday reiterated the annual reminder against firecracker use, pointing out the increase in the number of injuries recorded when 2006 rolled in.

A total of 448 people were injured, mostly by exploding firecrackers, nationwide starting from the evening of Dec. 31, 2005, to Jan. 1, 2006.

The figure was 407 during the same period in 2004-2005.

Particularly alarming to the DOH was the increase in the number of cases of ingestion of *watusi* (dancing firecrackers).

There were nine cases during the December 2005-January 2006 period compared to only four in 2004-2005.

"We appeal to parents to really watch over their children," Duque said at a press conference. "They may even inspect their children's drawers and check for *watusi.*"

The campaign against this small but deadly firecracker is so serious that the DOH released a separate health advisory for it.

Symptoms

The advisory listed the symptoms of *watusi* poisoning: burns, burning pain in the throat and garlic odor in the breath, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain and shock.

In case of watusi ingestion, Duque prescribed the consumption of egg whites (six to eight for children and eight to 12 for adults) before proceeding to the hospital.

As a first aid measure, egg whites can deal with the deadly components of the *watusi*, such as phosphorus, potassium nitrate and potassium chlorate, Duque said.

Another concern for the DOH is the now popular boga, which is triggered by denatured alcohol.

At a press conference in January 2006, the DOH said the *boga* was responsible for 16 injuries.

Curiously, the *watusi* belongs to the list of "legal" fireworks. But it is not clear where the *boga* falls.

Other legal firecrackers are the *bawang*, baby rocket, small triangle, Judas belt, sparklers, *luces*, Roman candle, *trompillo*, whistle bomb and sky rocket.

The illegal ones are the big triangle, super *Lolo* and its equivalents, mother rocket, rive star, OG, *pla-pla*, and pillbox.

Think twice

The holidays are dangerous in terms of not only firecrackers but also of overeating, especially of fatty and salty food, according to Duque.

"Since it's the holidays and there are so many parties, people should think twice before eating delicious but unhealthy food," he said, noting that cardiovascular problems were common among Filipinos.

"The problem is they might end up in the hospital ICU (intensive care unit)," he added.

Atherosclerosis, the stiffening and thickening of blood vessels that leads to a stroke or a heart attack, is triggered by risk factors like smoking and obesity.

Over the years, vessels and arteries are clogged by chronic intake of salty and fatty food.

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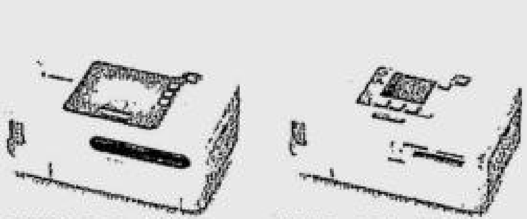
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FEMALE SANTAS
Female dancers clad in Santa Claus costumes greet visitors at an amusement park in Sta. Rosa, Laguna. ERNIE SARMIENTO

Gloria approves P700M in new defense contracts

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo has approved three contracts worth P707 million to upgrade five Navy ships and two aircraft, the Department of National Defense announced yesterday.

It was the first batch of defense contracts that she approved as acting defense secretary.

Ms Arroyo took over the department last Nov. 30 when her former chief legal counsel Avelino Cruz Jr. resigned after disagreeing with Malacañang's campaign to amend the Constitution before the May 2007 elections.

In his two-year stay in the DND, Cruz has put in place a long-term Philippine Defense Reform Program that has programmed the acquisition and upgrade of "mission-essential" military equipment for the next 10 years.

Ms Arroyo has said she will remain as acting defense secretary for at least 60 days before she appoints Cruz's replacement.

The approved contracts, worth P707,244,649, were meant to upgrade three Jacinto-class patrol vessels, two Patrol Killer Medium gunboats and two Britten Norman Islander aircraft, according to the DND.

The contract to upgrade the three Jacinto-class patrol vessels costs P353.6 million. The bidding was held in October last year, which FF Cruz Co. won. The construction company will do the repair at its shipyard in Lapuz Lapaz, Iloilo.

The contract to upgrade the PKM gunboats was awarded to Propmech Corp. for P282 million. The bidding was held in November last year. It was awarded to Propmech Corp.

Meanwhile, the bidding for the upgrade of the BN Islander aircraft was held in March this year. It was awarded to Hawker Pacific Pty for P71.5 million.

Ms Arroyo was expected to announce the approval of the contracts during the Armed Forces of the Philippines' anniversary last Dec. 21.

Instead, she announced that she has appointed former Navy chief Mateo Mayuga, former AFP Southern Luzon Command chief Pedro Cabuay and finance undersecretary Roberto Tan to the task force that will oversee the procurement of military equipment.

30 poachers from China arrested

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—AUTHORITIES have arrested 30 Chinese poachers who were caught illegally fishing in Philippine waters off the world-famous Tubattaha Reef in southern Palawan on Thursday, police said Saturday.

Chief Supt. Napoleon Cachuela, Mimaropa police director, said Coast Guard and Navy personnel accosted the Chinese fishermen at around 2:30 p.m. on Thursday while they were fishing inside the protected Tubattaha Reef.

The Chinese's vessel yielded 300 pieces of live "mameng," a rare protected fish species.

Cachuela could not give other details of the arrest as the Chinese nationals were still being held by the arresting officers in one of the atolls off Tubattaha.

Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, December 24, 2006
4th Sunday of Advent

1st Reading: Micah 5:1-4

Ruler of Israel

The Lord says this, "You, Bethlehem Ephrathah, so small that you are hardly named among the clans of Judah, from you shall I raise the one who is to rule over Israel. For he comes forth from of old, from the ancient times.

Yahweh, therefore, will abandon Israel until such time as she who is to give birth has given birth. Then the rest of his deported brothers will return to the people of Israel.

He will stand and shepherd his flock with the strength of Yahweh, in the glorious Name of Yahweh, his God. They will live safely while he wins renown to the ends of the earth. He shall be peace."

When the Assyrian invades our land
and sets foot on our territory,
we will raise against him
not one but seven shepherds,
eight warlords.

2nd Reading: Hebrews 10:5-10

I will do your will

This is why on entering the world, Christ says: You did not desire sacrifice and offering; you were not pleased with burnt offerings and sin offerings. Then I said: "Here I am. It was written of me in the scroll. I will do your will, O God."

First he says: Sacrifice, offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire nor were you pleased with them-although they were required by the Law. Then he says: Here I am to do your will.

This is enough to nullify the first will and establish the new. Now, by this will of God, we are sanctified at once by the sacrifice of the body of Christ Jesus.

Gospel: Luke 1:39-45

Mother of the Lord

Mary then set out for a town in the Hills of Judah. She entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leapt in her womb. Elizabeth was filled with holy spirit, and giving a loud cry, said, "You are most blessed among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb! How is it that the mother of my Lord comes to me? The moment your greeting sounded in my ears, the baby within me suddenly leapt for joy. Blessed are you who believed that the Lord's word would come true!"

Commentary

Ah Bethlehem, the least will be the home of the One who will be ruler, who is from of old, who is the shepherd, the reconciler who will bring them home and let them remain secure. His name shall be peace! This is the one who will do the will of God. The only sacrifice God has ever wanted: obedience, given freely. And Mary goes in haste to Judah, greets Elizabeth and she is recognized in her greeting (of peace). The Spirit surges from the Word she bears upon Elizabeth and stirs John into kicking with life. Mary is blessed for trusting in the Lord's words to her. We are blessed in trusting God's words too-will the Word take on our flesh this year? Will we obey and give our bodies, with Jesus to God in sacrifice?

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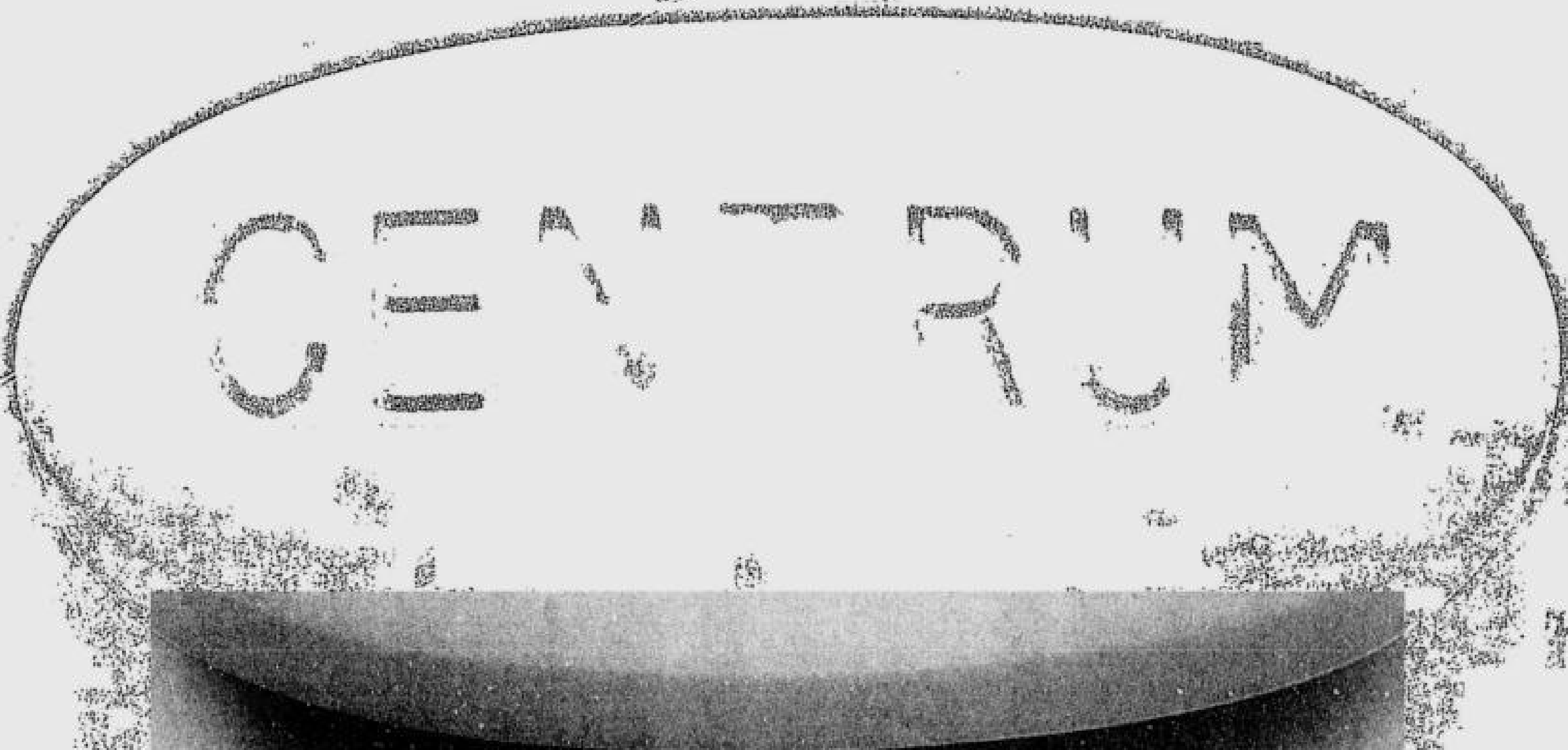

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OPINION

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Giving

EDITORIALS

APART FROM GIVING IN THIS SEASON OF SHARing, it may do us well to remember that giving can also have disastrous consequences. Some forms of giving tend to develop in the receivers a mind-set of dependence, or even worse, a culture of mendicancy—which is among the worst things one can do to a person's dignity. The first we often see in overly caring senior parents practically "raising" the families of their adult children and in many a troubled OFW family. Of the second, well, we don't have to look far beyond the streets of Metro Manila to find examples.

Even so, it is not just the character of the receiver that giving could put in jeopardy. A former UP professor once cautioned a group of social workers with these words: "Being at the giving end could be as destructive as being at the receiving end." Elaborating, he said that one of the problems with being at the giving end for a long time is the sense of self-importance, the air of superiority that could eventually develop through constantly having so many of the less fortunate "depending" on them. If "charity workers" and donors are not careful, they could fall into this dangerous hole, and giving then becomes a kind of ego-trip and a means for personal gratification. In other words, the self, not the receivers' needs, becomes the giver's primary concern, which makes the giving short-ended.

To be sure, the Child Jesus did not envision that kind of giving. Neither the kind of giving that is not complete unless the name of the givers are made known—like the ones often done in relief operations by politicians and would-be candidates—nor the one where the giver expects something in return, whether in the form of gifts, favors or contracts.

The giving that Christ taught is self-effacing. In its highest Christian sense, it empowers; more specifically, it looks forward to the receivers themselves ultimately becoming givers as well. Put another way, the best Santa Claus is the one who would make of his receivers new Santa Clauses, such as a philanthropist who sponsors scholarships for indigent students.

This is the giving that's inspired by Christ. It ennobles both the giver and receiver, more than it gratifies one's worldly pride.

Receiving

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES should not request nor accept any form of gifts or favors this holiday season, especially if they come from suppliers, contractors and clients."

When Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez issued this warning last Dec. 15, she probably had in mind the thousands, even millions, of Christmas gifts going in the direction of government officials and employees during this Christmas season. She could not have meant that after the "holiday season," they may ask for or accept gifts. After all, she knows only too well that the country's anti-corruption law must apply equally to all and in all seasons.

Her statement makes us wonder what she meant to achieve. Did she mean to strike fear in the hearts of the usual bribe-takers and stop corruption in government? Or did she mean to assure the public that she is hell-bent on doing her duty? Or was she just performing an act because she felt the ombudsman had to say something about government people accepting gifts in this season of giving?

Still, the warning sounds strange, coming from someone who doesn't seem to care that P728 million in public funds marked for the purchase of fertilizers ended up in the wrong pockets, or that around P3 billion in public money intended for poll automation went down the drain. If the ombudsman behaves as if she were powerless to act on these two well documented scams, what makes her think that she could go after thousands of public servants who received "undocumented" gifts "from suppliers, contractors and clients"?

We will believe the ombudsman if the next time she issues a statement to the press she will order the arrest of everyone who sent her gifts. After all, the bribe-giver is as guilty as the bribe-taker, right?

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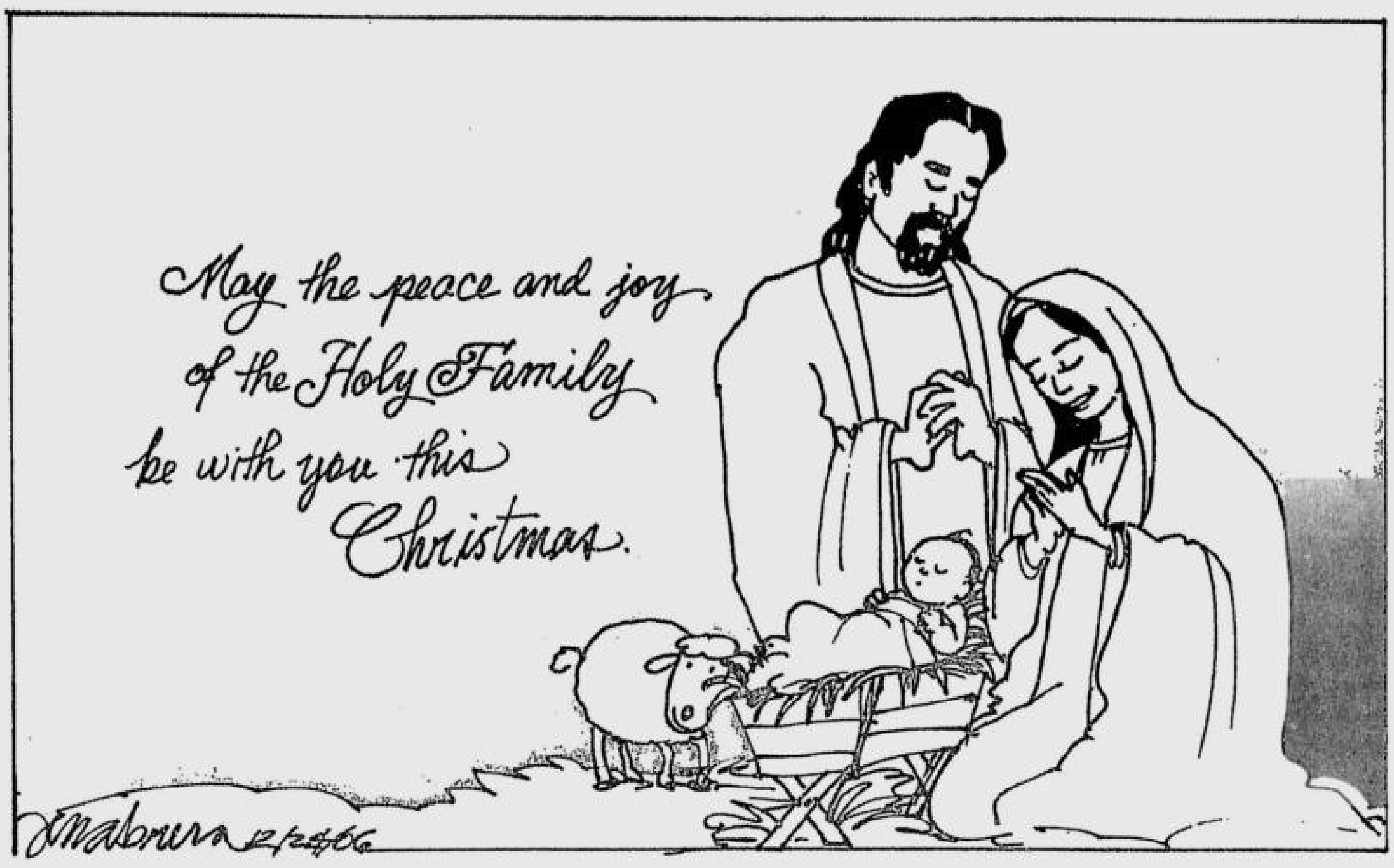


Making Christmas merry

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

CHRISTMAS WILL BE CELEBRATED TOMORrow not only by the Christians but also by people of other faiths like the Muslims, the Jews, the Buddhists, the followers of Hare Krishna and the diverse worshipers of the same God albeit with different names. In this now global community, even pagans are joining in the festivities although without the religiosity inspired by the Nativity in the hills of Bethlehem more than 2,000 years ago.

Such religiosity is no longer felt even among most of the Christian world today except the singers of the holy psalms and the devout parishioners in ancient barrios like ours who still feel the old reverence for the Almighty. In this more realistic age, many people of whatever faith now regard Christmas as only an ordinary holiday, like a College Anniversary or Arbor Day, to be observed with civic remembrance but not spiritual fervor.

The true meaning of Christmas is not felt by the young children who identify it not with the Holy Infant but with Santa Claus as the bearer of gifts. It is only when they grow older that they will recognize the virtue and power of prayer as the invisible link between Heaven and Earth. Jesus scolded his disciples and said, "Suffer little children to come to me, and forbid them not; for of such is the Kingdom of God." They are His naïve and unquestioning believers but, for some of them, only as long as they remain young.

The trouble is that little children grow to mature persons, and the faith of their earlier years may be challenged by adult uncertainties. Their innocent ideas are tested by serious inquiries that may turn into doubt and become disbelief and sometimes even sacrilege. This is what has happened to some Christian dropouts, so to speak, who now look upon Christmas only as a day of popular merriment and not of thanksgiving to Divine Providence.

Christmas is now more a season for commercial exploitation than a religious event glorifying the Lord. It is the excuse of the merchants to plug all conceivable gifts, from toys for the children, jewelry and perfume for the women, belts for bulging bellies and drooping pants, to hair restorers for balding men. Advertisers act like carnival barkers yelling SALE! SALE! SALE! of everything everywhere for everyone. Prayers are forgotten in the furious shopping for holiday presents.

It is regrettable that many people now regard Christmas only as an occasion for gift-giving, either voluntary or mostly obligatory. Still the traditional time for the exchange of love and friendship, it means now to many cynics only an irksome necessity to give as a social duty.

Sweethearts appreciate the chance to express their feelings with tokens of affection they can afford, whether it be a simple greeting card or a condominium; a romantic kiss is, of course, the least expensive and the most persuasive. But there are those for whom giving is a compulsion that mars the amiability of what to them is a bothersome Yuletide. They are the Scrooges who give not from the heart but from the wallet.

The practice now is to remember not only those we sincerely appreciate but also those mostly nameless persons, like messengers and security guards, who expect some thanks for their casual customary services or small favors. I do not begrudge them the little tokens of gratitude they hope for, but I am thinking of more deserving beneficiaries of our generosity during this season of goodwill.

I refer to the Milenyo in Central Luzon and the recent Reming in the Bicol region that killed or injured hundreds of people, destroyed their houses, flooded their farms, and saw their happiness shattered by the angry winds. These suddenly dispossessed casualties are facing a bleak future and a particularly cheerless Christmas Day tomorrow. It is they for whom giving our assistance is a compulsory kindness that they desperately need for their survival.

Without our compassion, they will not feel the serenity of the usually happy time that unites our nation in veneration of the Babe in the manger, at least for one reverent day. Without our compassion, those helpless people buffeted by the howling tempests can tomorrow only remember, in sadness and perhaps bitterness, the lost peace and contentment of their stricken lives. Unless we help them.

We can make their misfortune more bearable during this festive time for most of us but not for them. By extending to them the material assistance to fill their needs and heal their wounds, we can help them savor at least some of the Christmas bounties we enjoy in full and even abundant measure. By being kind to them in their loneliness, we can make our own Christmas more meaningful as our humble obedience to the message the choir of angels sang in Bethlehem.

The INQUIRER has started a fund drive for the benefit of the typhoon victims, and we are hoping all of us will support it with what little (or the most) we can give them in food, clothes, cash and toys. We can make tomorrow a Merry Christmas for them as it will also be especially for us, remembering the Savior's comforting thought that "who gives himself with his alms feeds three, himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me."

Merry Yuletide greetings to one and all!

Focus

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

THE KOREANS USE THE GREETING "*ANYONG haseyo?*" whenever they meet each other. I spent four years in Korea as a missionary, and the first time somebody greeted me that way, I responded, "*Ewan ko sa 'yo!*"

* * *

It's Christmas once again, and let me greet you today "*Anyong haseyo?*" It means "Are you at peace?" My wish is that you are at peace, especially this Christmas. In spite of problems and cares, I wish you and your family, our country and our world true peace.

* * *

In many ways, peace really depends much on what is inside you. In today's Gospel (Lk. 1, 39-45) we hear of two pregnant women, Mary and Elizabeth, sharing their peace and joy with each other. In spite of the difficult situation they were in. One conceived in questionable circumstances, and the other was pregnant in her old age. They had their worries and concerns, but they focused on gratitude and praise.

How you feel at Christmas really depends much upon you and your focus. Like Mary and Elizabeth, let us lift up our thanksgiving to the Lord.

* * *

No matter what, and no matter how valid your concerns are, hey, it's Christmas, and you are still here, and you are still alive. Isn't that a blessing in itself? Think about it: There were people who were with you last Christmas and are no longer with you now. It means you are still allowed to live by God. But what sort of a life are you living? It also means that you still have a mission in life. But are doing your mission in life?

* * *

If there is no peace in your heart, maybe you focused more on the "activity scene" rather on the Nativity scene. Instead of focusing on the material trimmings that go along with our Christmas celebration, focus on the poverty that surrounded, but did not dampen, the spirit of the first Christmas. There was peace in spite of the deprivations, because there was God. Find time today to fade away from the "activity scene" and spend time to meditate on the Nativity scene, and you will find peace.

* * *

A Nativity scene moment downed on me one morning when I said goodbye to the driver who brought me from a *Misa de Gallo*. He said, "Mary Christmas, Pader!" I smiled, too, wanting to correct his pronunciation, but at that very moment the real meaning of Christmas struck me. The first Christmas was Mama Mary's Christmas. It was simple, peaceful, joyful and hopeful. Mary was focused on the Child, not on the grim circumstances that surrounded them.

More than a merry Christmas, may we all experience a Mary Christmas. P.S. Let us not be a *pader* (wall) this Christmas. Let us open our hearts, our minds and our pockets especially this Christmas.

* * *

Parents who feel that they cannot and are not giving enough to their children should remember that Mary and Joseph, too, did not have presents for the Child like the Three Kings had, but they were present to Him. More than your presents, it is your loving happy presence that really matters most in the lives of your children.

* * *

Mary and Elizabeth teach us about trust. They were simple, humble women who believed and trusted that God's promise to them will be fulfilled, in spite of all the odds. They held on to God's power and God's word, and that's why they were blessed. Those who rely on their own power and trust in their own riches will never be truly blessed. Oh sure, they can have their cake and even eat it, too, but they will never have peace, and will not even rest in peace. Christmas reminds us to go back to the basic truth that without God, without humility, without truth, without contentment, without love, we can never have peace.

* * *

Christmas is all about "Noel" ("God is with us"). The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. In so far as we make His presence and love felt, then we make Christmas happen again. Yes, we all must be busy spreading the good news and perpetuating the values of the Kingdom of God. Too bad some people are so busy with their "No-el" (no elections) agenda, forgetting God's agenda even at Christmas. Let us all pray for real and lasting character change. Let us put God's agenda over and above our own personal agenda. Let us help build God's kingdom in this world and forget building and perpetuating our own kingdoms.

* * *

Our Christ the King Seminary Chapel will be consecrated as a Shrine of the Divine Word on Christmas Day. Bishop Honesto Ongtioko, D.D. will be the main celebrant in the 10 a.m. Mass. May the Divine Word be enshrined in our hearts and in the hearts of all! Mary Christmas everyone!

* * *

Always remember that God only makes happy endings. If it's not happy, then it's not yet the end. If you're in a struggle, take courage for it's not done yet. Trust and wait, and strengthen your faith and pray. Get daily suggestions of prayer, text ON PRAYER to 2948 for Globe/Sun or 3940 for Smart.

God bless you. Mama Mary loves you!

* * *

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, help me to stay focused on the Nativity scene instead of the "activity scene." Amen.

Looking good and feeling young at 75

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

FOR THE PAST FEW WEEKS, I HAVE BEEN receiving invitations from gentlemen friends who were turning 75. I was reminded of an old saying that the advantage of being 75 is that one has had many lovers. Unfortunately, from here on, one may find it difficult to rise to the occasion. At age 75, Nelson Mandela became president of South Africa after 27 years spent in prison on Robben Island. Which goes to show what one is capable of doing at a time when some of us may be checking out funeral arrangements which were paid for many years ago.

* * *

In 1947, Samuel E. Sibayan was one of 28 Philippine Boy Scouts who were sent to the 6th World Jamboree in Moisson, France. It was the first post-World War II Scout Jamboree and he, along with now Rep. Roque Ablan Jr., was chosen to represent the province of Ilocos Norte in the Philippine delegation.

The sea voyage from Singapore to Bombay, across the Suez Canal, through the Mediterranean, to England was aboard the Empress of Scotland, a converted troopship. One-half of the ship was occupied by British soldiers returning home from the war and the other half was for paying passengers. The scouts were billeted with the soldiers but were allowed to roam all over the ship.

Sibayan recalls that the Jamboree in France was one big carnival, with some 50,000 boy scouts from all over the world gathered just two years after the worst conflict in the history of mankind. The *tinikling*, which they rehearsed for the event, was an instant hit with the crowds. As they met fellow scouts who became more like brothers to them, Sibayan often wondered why nations had to go to war over differences.

Returning home, they were treated like heroes, with parades held in their honor. Flying to Laoag from Manila, they were on the same plane as Vice President Elpidio Quirino. Upon arrival at the airport, Quirino was dumbfounded to realize that the welcoming crowd was for the boy scouts and that he was just a neglected bystander.

Sibayan remembers what scouting did for him and how it influenced his life and career. He said, "What is important is that I learned to deal with people. It is looking at a person straight in the eye and saying I am your friend and I want to help you."

Today, Sibayan, a retired surgeon who was home for the holidays, resides in Baltimore, Maryland.

* * *

J.J. Calero in his BusinessWorld column last Nov. 16, 2006 wrote about Max J. Edralin Jr. as a PR professional. "Mention Max Edralin and the first thing that comes to mind is a true-blue, dyed-in-the-wool public relations professional."

Like Sammy Sibayan, Max was born in Sarrat, Ilocos Norte, the youngest of three children. His first job after graduating from high school was that of a messenger-janitor at the Philippines Herald. At that time, my Dad was publisher of the paper and offered the position to Max. His joining the Herald was in line with the tradition of helping the young ones from the old hometown get started in the big city. Hard work and a strong determination resulted in his becoming one of the top reporters of the paper.

As J.J. Calero points out, Max became a celebrity when, as a reporter, he spent a day in jail for refusing to name his sources in the famous Monroy-Castelo murder case in the 1950s.

From the Herald, Max ended up with Secretary Cornelio Balmaceda as his PR man at the Department of Commerce, and from there he proceeded to make a name for himself in the world of public relations.

But more than the fact that he is one of the country's top professionals in a highly competitive environment, perhaps his greatest claim to fame these days, is that of being the proud grandfather of Alexis, one of the finest opera singers in the country today.

* * *

Cesar Emilio Aguinaldo Virata will be remembered as the nation's first prime minister and concurrent minister of finance from 1981 to 1986. I will always remember him as the only high government official who carried his own briefcase even while trooping the line during arrival honors being rendered by a military unit. Can you imagine Jose de Venecia or any of the current aspirant to the job of prime minister carrying their own attaché cases?

As one who served under him for many years in a difficult position, I will also remember Virata as the Boss who never raised his voice in anger but who would scratch his nose or his ears vigorously to indicate dissatisfaction with your work or your answers.

At 22, Virata graduated from the University of the Philippines with two degrees, a BS in Mechanical Engineering and another in Business Administration (cum laude). Eight years later, he would be dean of the College of Business Administration, and at age 40, the youngest secretary of finance in the Cabinet of President Ferdinand Marcos.

If you are a tennis player, don't let his age fool you. He plays as hard as he works.

* * *

Finally, my favorite brother-in-law, Jimmy Paz, who also just turned 75, tells me that there are certain advantages to getting older.

First, on a sinking boat, you will be saved with the women and children.

Second, you will probably be among the first to be released if you are involved in a hostage situation.

Third, you can tell your friends the same joke over and over and over again.

A blessed Christmas to all!

Gifts of the season

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

I THOUGHT THAT WE WOULD HAVE A HARD time finding the good spirits to celebrate the season. Last year's holidays were shadowed by the death of my brother Manny just before New Year, and in August this year, our eldest brother Nono passed away. Two days after Nono's passing, my husband's sister Nene also passed away after a few years' struggle with cancer.

It had seemed we would sleepwalk through the rest of the year, and finding the good cheer and excitement to see us through the holidays would be like stumbling upon a nice, shiny coin on a busy sidewalk. But gifts come in various guises and at unexpected times, and often when you aren't even looking for them. These, then have been the best gifts of the past year—gifts of people, opportunities, new chances, new eyes.

One gift has been in the form of a person, a priest, who came to our family during Nono's health crisis. Fr. Bobby Ebisa, SVD, was a missionary in Brazil for many years before he was re-assigned to the Philippines to take up an assignment at Radio Veritas Asia. Before then, he took up a management course at the Asian Institute of Management where he met my sister-in-law Coratec Jimenez. It was Tec who invited Father Bobby to say Mass at the hospital when Nono requested for one.

Since then, Father Bobby has been a valued presence in our lives, especially during the wake and funeral for Nono when he volunteered to organize the Masses and presided over the funeral Mass and rites.

I was especially touched when Father Bobby said, during one of his Masses, that the road to priesthood is marked by the gradual loosening of family ties, because a priest, especially a missionary, should be prepared to serve wherever and whenever he is called. With our brother Father Boboy serving in New York at that time, Father Bobby said he was only too glad to step into his shoes, that it was only right that an SVD confrere fulfill a brother's familial obligation.

And indeed, Father Bobby has since become part of the family. When we discovered he is quite a movie buff, he became a regular "tag-along" press previews. On special occasions, he goes out of his way to greet family members, especially those whom he feels need a caring word, a touching gesture. He has truly been a "gift" to the family when we needed someone like him the most.

* * *

THE PAST few months, my husband Pie and I have also been embroiled in a project we call "the Braganza book," a compilation of stories and anecdotes on my maternal side of the family, including a short history of our hometown of Alaminos, Pangasinan.

To facilitate communications, because most of my cousins and two uncles are now based in the United States, we created an e-group, and this is where we have shared stories, memories, data and even photos. Thanks to the wonders of the Internet, we have all been brought up to speed on each other's lives, finding out for the first time, for instance, that some of our cousins had gotten married. Thanks to the book project, our concept of family has indeed broadened—in numbers and diversity.

We have also been able to trade childhood memories and reminiscences of our parents when they and we were much younger. The e-group, meanwhile, has also allowed us to exchange birthday greetings and of course holiday wishes—serving a present-day need even as we use it to trace our past.

When we first began planning the book, an incredible five years ago, we thought the project would serve only to ground us in our roots and heritage, in our hometown and the family's imprint on its life and history. But we are finding out that it has also helped us re-connect, re-building ties that we had allowed to slacken, cementing relations that had somehow broken down.

What a blessing the book project has turned out to be! Now, if only people would heed the deadlines...

* * *

AND from my cousin Dr. Butch Braganza in New Jersey, who lost his wife Rose to breast cancer also this year, a Christmas gift of insight, when he wrote this message on our e-group:

"We wish all of you a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR.

"Although this is an entirely new life for us without our beloved ROSE, we will rejoice in the fact that she is with OUR LORD. What greater reward can surpass this?"

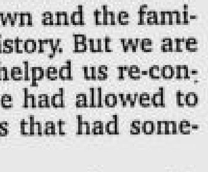
Indeed, it is all a matter of perspective, and of realizing that every passing is followed by a joyful welcome in the afterlife, a thought that sustains us despite the grief and lingering sadness.

And from me to you, this gift: a passage from an unlikely source, the book "In the Company of Cheerful Ladies" by Alexander McCall Smith, the latest in a franchise about the first lady detective in Botswana by the name of Precious Ramotswe. Early in the book, Madama Ramotswe attends Sunday service and the pastor delivers a moving message on the mysteries of life that says in part:

"And so it is with suffering. It may seem a mystery to us that there can be suffering in a world in which we claim to see a divine purpose. But the more we think about that mystery, the more an answer eludes us. We could, then, shrug our shoulders and fall into despair, or we could accept the mystery for what it is, as being something that we simply cannot understand. And that does not mean that we lapse into nihilism, into the philosophy that says that we can do nothing about the suffering and the pain of the world. We can do something about it, and all of us in this place today have the chance to do something, even if only a small thing, to diminish the volume of suffering in the world. We can do that by acts of kindness to others; we can do that by relieving their pain."

May serving others allow us not just to understand the human state, but also to transcend it and give it meaning. A meaningful Christmas to you all!

Changing our priorities



PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

WHAT THE COUNTRY NEEDS, SAYS THE Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, is not Charter change but character change. I think what we need today is neither Charter change nor character change, but a change in our priorities—a change that reflects a greater resolve to put our national destiny in our hands rather than leave it to the mercy of events.

Proponents of Charter change say we need Charter change. They should tell us instead which of the priorities enshrined in the 1987 Constitution they want to change. They talk of a shift to a unicameral parliamentary system in the name of efficiency. We have just seen what an "efficient" unicameral legislature is capable of doing when it badly wants something. Do we really want this kind of efficiency that is achieved at the cost of democracy?

On the other hand, the bishops have called for character change. This call is too general to have any compelling value; it has confused a lot of people.

Character grows out of the life of a person or of a people. It is the product of many contingencies. It is not something one freely chooses. But, character needs not be destiny. Long-term changes in character follow changes in circumstances. With self-reflection and understanding, with determination and effort, a nation may be able to turn away from what it has become by re-arranging its priorities. Could this be what the bishops meant when they called for a change in character?

I believe it is easier to visualize change when it is defined in terms of deliberately taking hold of one's priorities, instead of leaving these to chance. Consider, for example, what it would mean for our country if we deliberately prioritize:

1. Education over debt service
2. Social equity over counter-insurgency
3. Ecological sustainability over economic profitability
4. Local employment over labor export
5. Political liberty over national security
6. Poverty reduction over military expenditure
7. Self-reliance over dependence on foreign assistance
8. De-centralization over centralization
9. National development over global integration
10. Human development over economic growth

What we may immediately notice about this list is that it is not a choice between values and vices, but between two sets of values. Changes in priorities do not just happen; they are fought for in the political arena over a long period. But, even though they are political questions, their resolution is shaped by the moral and ideological concepts that people tap when looking for validation of the stances they take on issues. Some will quote Jesus or Gandhi; others will cite Marx or Rizal.

Pope Benedict XVI is quite emphatic in saying that the Church itself must not take up the political battle for a just society. But, he does not take this to mean that it must remain in the sidelines.

In his first encyclical, "Deus Caritas Est," a tightly woven document, he wrote: "She (the Church) has to play her part through rational argument and she has to reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot prevail and prosper. A just society must be the achievement of politics, not of the Church. Yet the promotion of justice through efforts to bring about openness of mind and will to the demands of the common good is something which concerns the Church deeply."

"The just ordering of society and the State is a central responsibility of politics. As Augustine once said, a State which is not governed according to justice would be just a bunch of thieves: '*Remota itaque iustitia quid sunt regna nisi magna latrocinia*?'.... Politics is more than a mere mechanism for defining the rules of public life: its origin and its goal are found in justice, which by its very nature has to do with ethics... But ...what is justice? The problem is one of practical reason; but if reason is to be exercised properly, it must undergo constant purification, since it can never be completely free of the danger of a certain ethical blindness caused by the dazzling effect of power and special interests."

Clearly, the policies of any State are ultimately to be measured in terms of how well they contribute to the attainment of justice and the promotion of the common good. But that is a matter for the people themselves to decide. "The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society is proper to the lay faithful," says Benedict XVI.

From this standpoint, the prayer-rally at the Luneta the other Sunday was clearly the wrong place to look if one was hoping for a political event to happen. Those who seriously wish to respond to Pope Benedict's challenge to the laity to be active politically might want to take a look at the whole-page ad that a new political party, "Ang Kapatiran," took out the other day in the INQUIRER (12/22/06, P.15). This new party draws heavily from the Church's social teachings in defining its stand on the crucial issues facing our society today. It aims to field candidates in the 2007 elections, but its long-term mission is unmistakably the re-moralization of Philippine politics and governance.

Merry Christmas!

* * *

Comments to public.lives@gmail.com

And so this is Christmas

REBEL WITHOUT A CLUE

Patricia Evangelista

I HAVEN'T BEEN STUCK IN MAKATI TRAFFIC FOR almost a year. Why sit in the backseat of a taxi and pay through the nose for an hour and a half, when you can race across the city on the MRT? But here I am, a few nights before Christmas, tapping my knee while sitting shotgun on my friend David's van, listening to him wax philosophical over Angel Locsin's Timex billboard. It is 8:30, and our dinner was set at 8. My best girl friend is in the backseat, foraging through car junk for anything remotely edible. She comes up with some sort of Chinese gelatin in little pink paper packets. We let her rip into it, and happily cheer when the Queen of the Obsessive-Compulsive finds herself with wet goo spattered on her hands.

It's a long way, past three car accidents, past Katipunan, past a series of skinny roads lined with tricycles and *sari-sari* stores lit up with single-strings of colored lights. We make it up the three flights of stairs to the screen door at 9:30, after David and I have had a total of three arguments (involving graphic design, racial discrimination and whose fault it is that we forgot to buy rice).

There is a brown table and a few chairs, a leather couch in front of the TV and a bookshelf carefully filled with philosophy textbooks and old classics. There are newspapers on a holder by the couch and a chess set on the table. No Christmas tree, no candles, no colored lights and holly wreathes, but it is Christmas in the room, and I think, just as I'm engulfed in a hug from an old teammate, that this is why I grew up.

There are changes. There's a new couple sitting on the couch: the boy we thought would never notice girls is holding hands with the girl we thought was too smart to hook up with a boy. Our longhaired Romeo is now clean-cut and preppy. One of us is just back for a few weeks from higher studies abroad and is practically using fish sauce as soup after complaining that Datu Puti Patis is worth two pounds in the United Kingdom. Our wild girl is married to the intellectual who now sports a Beatles haircut. There is a baby on the way, the first one in our group of old, old friends, which is why "Beethoven for Babies" is playing on the CD player, and "Socrates for Children" now sits unwrapped on a pile of Christmas wrapping paper. The expectant couple is certain their kid will come out a boy genius. His father insists he will be speaking fluent French by 3, his mother claims he will be an artistic prodigy, and the rest of us make inner promises that we will do our best to protect the poor baby from parental insanity.

For once there is enough food for everyone—nothing like the plate-grabbing, rice-snatching, barbecue-hoarding meals back in college. There is homemade spicy chicken from our mother-to-be and a cake whose giver insisted was homemade an entire two hours after we discovered the price tag on the plastic container.

They say that real friends will stab you in the front, so I'm guessing I will find friends no more real than this. Insults fly thick and fast. I am asked why I'm wearing a bath towel as a skirt, the newly-thin are asked what drugs they're taking, and the much-healthier ones are asked if they know they now warrant their own zip codes.

And although name-calling and old issues are dredged up and argued over again, there are certain things that never change. Our pregnant hostess waddles around in her pink dress with the plunging neckline, and although I have sworn to renounce all clichés, I can find no other word to describe her than "glowing." She walks from one end of the room to the other, telling dirty jokes and giving away presents. She stops by Gino's chair, and he offers her his lap. She looks at him wistfully, and says, "I'm 16 pounds heavier now." He shakes his head, smiles the matinee-idol smile that has dozens of girls (and boys) at his feet. She sighs and sits down, and her husband beams at her from across the room.

Gifts are passed around, and our hostess insists that the boys fit their shirts. They do, reluctantly, and we find out why. Each boy is crammed into a shirt a size too small, and there are things poking out that boys aren't supposed to have poking out, as one boy demonstrates by wrapping his arms around his chest. "But the sleeves fit!" insists our hostess. The boy in question, who right now resembles a stuffed sausage, answers in turn. "It's a shirt, who cares about the sleeves if it doesn't fit?" So in the same way that we've passed around loans and lunches and secrets, the boys switch shirts, although our pal with the zip code goes home swearing he will go on a diet.

Things we would have never found funny before are irresistibly hilarious on this night before Christmas. Our friend fresh from Britain tells us that her flatmates in Manchester insist that each of them take a turn cooking their own national dish—and she has launched a campaign to convince them that fried egg is actually the Philippine national dish. There is talk of tuition fee increases and quantum physics, positivism and the Kama Sutra.

I hear old stories I've never heard before. Back when we were still debating, I'm told, one of my friends, Mark, walked into my room when I was in the pool looking for a book, and found my silicone pads sitting on my desk. His girlfriend found him staring intensely at the peach-colored jelly-like pads, poking at them and scratching his head. Tonight I don't even have room to blush, because hey, it's Christmas, and the night is long, and I know enough about them to make them blush redder than a smashed tomato. I heard someone once say that friends are God's way of apologizing to us for our families, although sometimes, I wonder what sort of apology God will make for giving me these kinds of friends.

"We're born alone," says Orson Welles. "We live alone, we die alone. Only through our love and friendship can we create the illusion for the moment that we're not alone." Maybe this is the last time we'll do this, the last Christmas we'll all be together, and I wish I can make things stop here, now, when there are empty soda bottles and cups of coffee, right when all of us are still laughing and dreaming and have the whole world ahead of us.

Friends are like bras. They're close to your heart and are there for support. Although I may have never needed much support in the chest department, I'm glad that at least once, every year, I'll know there's another sort of support that'll be ready whenever the dreaming and the laughing stop.

Happy holidays.

* * *

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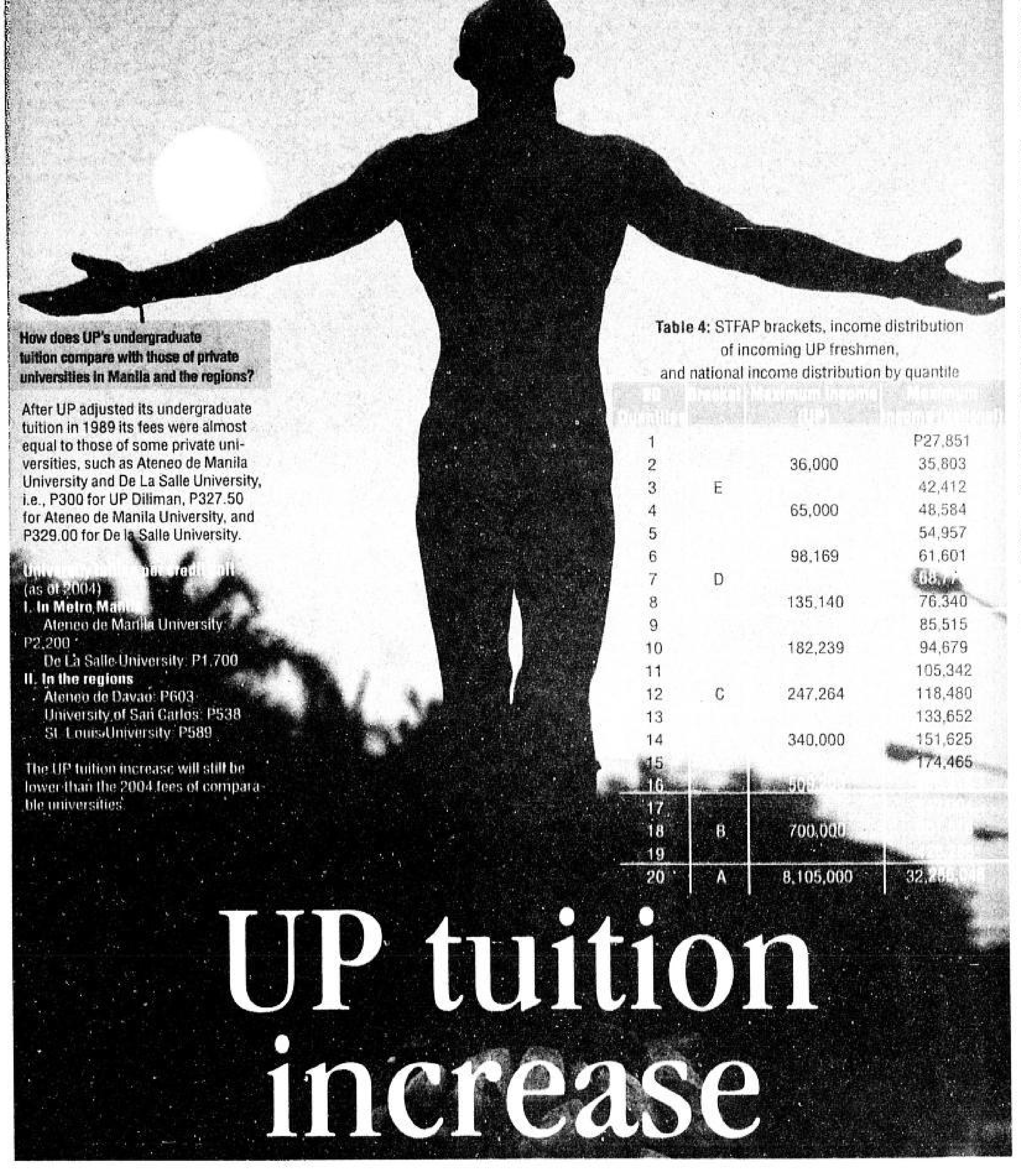
Editor **Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.**

UP tuition increase

ON DEC. [illegible] the BOARD OF REGENTS (BOR) of the University of the Philippines (UP) approved the proposal to raise tuition and miscellaneous fees starting June 2007. [illegible] 1989 [illegible] incoming freshmen [illegible]

[illegible] Diliman, Manila [illegible] P1,000 [illegible] Visayas and Mindanao will go up to P600 from P200. [illegible] Diliman, Manila [illegible] in 1989, according to UP President Emerlinda Roman. The BOR [illegible]

[illegible] Socialized Tuition and Financial Assistance Program from nine to five and the recommendation to charge [illegible] the richest bracket (declared family income of more than P1 million a year) P1,500 per unit. [illegible] 80 percent of incoming freshmen will [illegible] full cost of a UP education [illegible] according to Roman. [illegible] All UP Academic Employees Union [illegible] the Roman administration [illegible] 300 percent [illegible] STFAP [illegible] P80,000 [illegible] P130,000 [illegible] P300 [illegible] P130,001 to P170,000 [illegible] P1,000 [illegible] according to the union.



How does UP's undergraduate tuition compare with those of private universities in Manila and the regions?

After UP adjusted its undergraduate tuition in 1989 its fees were almost equal to those of some private universities, such as Ateneo de Manila University and De La Salle University, i.e., P300 for UP Diliman, P327.50 for Ateneo de Manila University, and P329.00 for De la Salle University.

University tuition per credit unit
(as of 2004)
I. In Metro Manila
Ateneo de Manila University: P2,200
De La Salle University: P1,700
II. In the regions
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University of San Carlos: P538
St. Louis University: P589

The UP tuition increase will still be lower than the 2004 fees of comparable universities.

Table 4: STFAP brackets, income distribution of incoming UP freshmen, and national income distribution by quantile

20 Quantile	Bracket	Maximum income (UP)	Maximum income (Philippines)
1			P27,851
2		36,000	35,803
3	E		42,412
4		65,000	48,584
5			54,957
6		98,169	61,601
7	D		[illegible]
8		135,140	76,340
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12	C	247,264	118,480
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14		340,000	151,625
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16		[illegible]	[illegible]
17			[illegible]
18	B	700,000	[illegible]
19			[illegible]
20	A	8,105,000	[illegible]

A COMMITTEE TO REVIEW the Socialized Tuition and Financial Assistance Program (STFAP) was constituted by UP President Emerlinda Roman in July 2006 following the submission of a study conducted by an ad hoc committee formed in 2005 to review tuition and other fees in the university.

In its report, the ad hoc committee noted that since 1989, when tuition in UP was adjusted to levels (P300 and P200 per unit for Diliman and regional campuses, respectively) at par with those prevailing in comparable private universities in the country and a program of socialized tuition discounts based on ability to pay was introduced, the university had not adjusted its fee structure in the face of continuing price-inflation.

This situation has resulted in the erosion of the real value of tuition to just one-third of its 1989 levels today even as nominal incomes had risen threefold on average. Consequently, students who are in a position to shoulder the full cost of a UP education have been able to enjoy an unintended subsidy at the same time that students deserving of financial assistance under the university's STFAP have had to make do with stipends greatly reduced in real value by inflation.

Incoming freshmen

Thus, the ad hoc committee recommended raising the undergraduate base tuition from P300 to P1,000 per unit on the Diliman, Manila and Los Baños campuses and from P200 to P600 per unit in Baguio and the Visayas and Mindanao units. Envisioned to take effect in June 2007, and only for incoming freshmen, this proposed adjustment attempts to merely restore the real value of UP's tuition to the level which had already been deemed reasonable in 1989.

The committee also recommended increases in prevailing miscellaneous fees charged by the autonomous units in order to help defray the most important recurring costs faced by the university, namely, electricity, maintenance of the Internet infrastructure, and the university library's book and serial collections.

University policy

The tuition-and-other-fees review committee, moreover, recommended the continuation of the university policy to assess [whether a] UP student's [declared family income is] *equal to, less than, or greater than* the base (or inflation-indexed) tuition in keeping with the principle that "students who can afford (it) should pay at least the full cost of their UP education as tuition, and students who cannot should be granted subsidies in the form of discounts in tuition and other fees, book allowances and monthly stipends."

Specifically, the committee recommended the reduction in the number of STFAP brackets from nine to five, the standardization of the semestral stipend to P12,000, and the designation of a special bracket for students coming from families that belong to the richest percentile in the income distribution, whether national or among entering freshmen. Students assigned to this bracket shall be charged 1.5 times the base tuition.

The ad hoc committee also recommended a triennial review and readjustment of the base tuition with reference to which the magnitude of discounts and the coverage of stipends that the university may be willing to offer in the future can be determined.

New tuition structure

Table 1 summarizes the key features of the new (or proposed) tuition structure in comparison with those of the existing one.

As proposed by the ad hoc committee to review tuition and other fees, only two base tuition rates shall be in effect under the new scheme for two groups of campuses compared with three under the existing structure. The number of STFAP brackets is also reduced from nine to five, the first five brackets that are entitled to a full discount under the current structure being collapsed into a single nonpaying bracket under the restructured scheme.

In addition, the stipend per semester is standardized at P12,000, whereas under the existing scheme four brackets (1-4) receive differentiated stipend amounts. Finally, whereas the highest income bracket is asked to pay the base tuition under the existing structure, in the proposed one, it is asked to pay at least 1.5 times the base tuition. This last feature is added in recognition of the wide differential in mean incomes between students belonging to the ninth and tenth deciles of the income distribution, whether of UP freshmen or of the entire population of Philippine households (See Table 3).

To distinguish the proposed scheme from the existing, we refer to the former as the "alphabetic," and the latter as the "numeric," bracketing scheme. (It should be noted that, since the adjusted tuition fees shall apply only to the entering freshman class, the two STFAP schemes shall be in effect until such time that the cohort of 2006-2007 has graduated.)

In the alphabetic scheme, Bracket A corresponds to the highest socioeconomic bracket and Bracket E the lowest. (Table 2)

Students in the lowest income bracket (E) with annual family incomes of P80,000 or less shall pay no tuition, laboratory and miscellaneous fees and receive a semestral stipend of P12,000, while those in the highest income bracket (A), with annual incomes above P1,000,000, shall pay P1,500 tuition per credit unit on the Diliman, Manila and Los Baños campuses or P1,000 on the Baguio, Visayas and Mindanao campuses.

The distribution of family incomes among admitted freshmen in 2004 is the basis for drawing the boundaries between the socioeconomic brackets.

Assuming that the income profile of entering UP students stays the same as in 2004 (the year for which the UP data cited below are available), close to 80 percent of admitted freshmen will be paying less than the "full cost" of a UP education under the proposed STFAP structure (column 2, Table 3 below); that is, if full cost is defined as P1,000 per unit.

(It should be noted, however, that the income profile is based solely on students' declared incomes and thus are likely to be understated.)

(In fact, full-cost tuition is really closer to P1,500 per unit based on estimates of direct cost of undergraduate instruction at UP [Table 5, Report of ad hoc committee to review tuition and other fees.] This implies that all but the richest 3-5 percent will continue to be subsidized by the state.)

Full discount, stipend

Bracket E students, who will enjoy full discount and a semestral stipend, will comprise more than 20 percent, while a similar percentage will be in Bracket D paying P300 per unit. Only the richest 20 percent will actually be paying the full cost; the greater proportion—about 40 percent—will be paying P600 per unit, or double what they are currently paying.

Since the actual distribution of freshmen entrants may, however, be different from one year to the next depending on various factors (e.g., University of the Philippines Admission Test passing rates, show rates, etc.), a better way to appreciate the new STFAP structure is to see how the proposed brackets map to the national income distribution.

With the new STFAP bracketing scheme, students up to the fourth decile, along with some from the fifth (approximately the 42nd percentile) of the national distribution (refer to column 4), shall be entitled to free tuition and a stipend (Bracket E). Those coming from families in the fifth up to the seventh deciles (approximately the 66th percentile) shall be in Bracket D with a 70-percent discount.

Bracket C with a 40-percent discount includes students from the seventh all the way up to the richest decile of the national distribution. This is because the income profile of UP students (columns 2 and 3) is markedly different from the national distribution (columns 4 and 5). Note that the top three income deciles in the UP distribution belong to the richest decile in the national distribution. In effect, UP students coming from families up to the 97th percentile of the national income distribution (maximum annual family income of P500,000) shall continue to enjoy a tuition subsidy even under the restructured STFAP. Thus, it is accurate to say that only those students who come from the most affluent families will be asked to pay full-cost or near full-cost tuition.

Flesh out mechanism

For reasons of vertical equity, it should not be objectionable then that a bracket (Bracket A) is being included to cover students from the richest percentile(s) who will be assessed 1.5 times the base tuition—although the mechanism for implementing this needs fleshing out.

Table 4 reinforces this point by presenting the national distribution of income by quantiles. As a closer inspection of the national data reveals, the highest income for families in the 19th quantile (or 95th percentile) is less than P500,000, placing students in this income group no higher than Bracket C. This means that the full effect of the proposed hike in UP tuition fees is likely to be felt only by those students whose families belong to the richest 3 percent of the population.

This accounts for approximately 20 percent of UP's entering class going by 2004 data.

Determining eligibility

The determination of whether a student qualifies for a tuition fee discount under STFAP is essentially a problem of determining whether the student's socioeconomic status as measured by family income classifies him or her as being in Brackets C, D or E.

This process is not costless and requires that families at the very least are willing to cooperate with the university in answering very personal questions relating to their finances. It also assumes that the university has the means to verify the information supplied given all the incentives and opportunities of subsidy applicants to conceal or underreport their incomes and assets.

Source: Report of the Committee to Review the STFAP headed by Prof. Edgar Atanacio of the UP College of Engineering.

Table 5: Entering freshmen in 2004 by income bracket based on declared incomes

Bracket	Diliman	Manila	Los Baños	Baguio	San Fernando	Cebu	[illegible]	Iloilo/Miagao	Mindanao	Total
A P1,000,000+	172	43	37	13	2	0	1	8	1	277
B P500,001-1,000,000	543	130	257	81	15	19	10	32	12	1,099
C P135,001-500,000	1,107	194	706	217	37	67	99	155	57	2,639
D P80,001-135,000	374	54	257	84	20	44	42	60	28	963
E P0-80,000	504	79	465	143	19	82	105	235	74	1,706
Total	2,700	500	1,722	538	93	212	257	490	172	6,684

Table 1: Existing and proposed tuition fee structure

Feature	Proposed	Existing
Base tuition	P1,000 per unit*	P300 per unit**
Number of STFAP brackets	5 (1 non-paying)	9 (5 nonpaying)
Tuition discounts	100, 70, 40 percent	100, 75, 50, 25 percent
Stipend per semester	P12,000	P6,750***
Highest income bracket tuition	1.5 times the base tuition	Base tuition

* Applicable fees in Baguio, San Fernando, Visayas and Mindanao are 60 percent of this.
** Applicable fee in Los Baños is P250 per unit, while P200 for other regional units.
*** This is an average for Brackets 1-4. The amount starts at P8,250 per semester for Bracket 1 and declines to P4,500 per semester for those in Bracket 4.

Table 2: STFAP alphabetic bracketing scheme

Bracket	Annual family income (in pesos)	P/unit tuition Group I	P/unit tuition Group II	Semestral stipend
A	Greater than P1,000,000	P1,500	P1,000	N.A.
B	P500,001 – P1,000,000	P1,000	P600	N.A.
C	P135,001 – P500,000	P600	P400	N.A.
D	P80,001 – P135,000	P300	P200	N.A.
E	P80,000 or less	0	0	P12,000

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Income Decile	Maximum income (freshmen)	Average income (freshmen)	Maximum income (Philippines)	Average income (Philippines)
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Seventh	340,000	288,047	151,625	134,473
Eighth	509,200	417,122	203,318	175,784
Ninth	700,000	591,795	301,516	245,939
Richest	8,105,000	1,186,699	32,256,048	545,836

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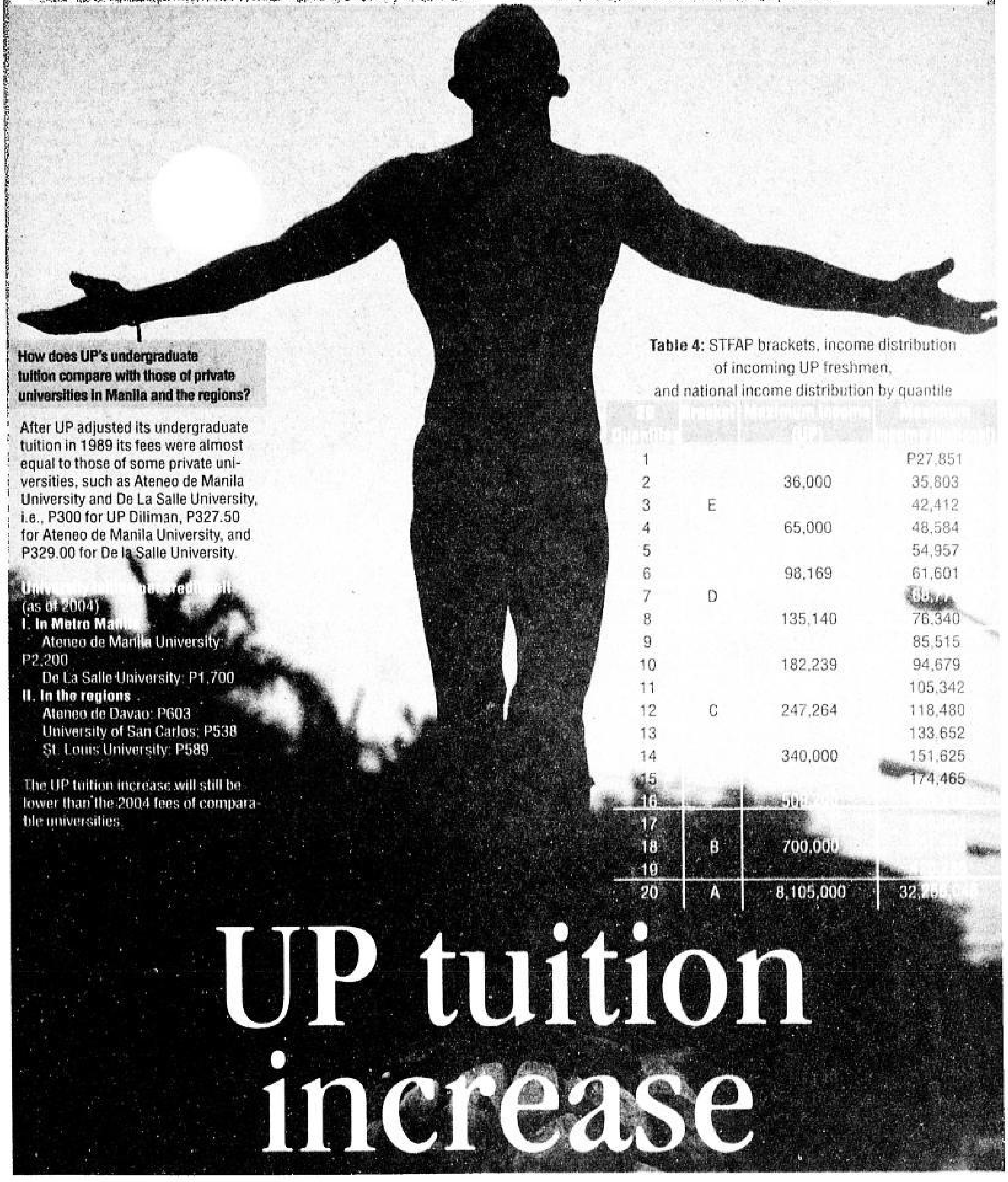

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TALK of the TOWN

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University policy

The tuition-and-other-fees review committee, moreover, recommended the continuation of the university policy to assess [whether a] UP student's [declared family income is] *equal to, less than, or greater than* the base (or inflation-indexed) tuition in keeping with the principle that "students who can afford (it) should pay at least the full cost of their UP education as tuition, and students who cannot should be granted subsidies in the form of discounts in tuition and other fees, book allowances and monthly stipends."

Specifically, the committee recommended the reduction in the number of STFAP brackets from nine to five, the standardization of the semestral stipend to P12,000, and the designation of a special bracket for students coming from families that belong to the richest percentile in the income distribution, whether national or among entering freshmen. Students assigned to this bracket shall be charged 1.5 times the base tuition.

The ad hoc committee also recommended a triennial review and readjustment of the base tuition with reference to which the magnitude of discounts and the coverage of stipends that the university may be willing to offer in the future can be determined.

New tuition structure

Table 1 summarizes the key features of the new (or proposed) tuition structure in comparison with those of the existing one.

As proposed by the ad hoc committee to review tuition and other fees, only two base tuition rates shall be in effect under the new scheme for two groups of campuses compared with three under the existing structure. The number of STFAP brackets is also reduced from nine to five, the first five brackets that are entitled to a full discount under the current structure being collapsed into a single nonpaying bracket under the restructured scheme.

In addition, the stipend per semester is standardized at P12,000, whereas under the existing scheme four brackets (1-4) receive differentiated stipend amounts. Finally, whereas the highest income bracket is asked to pay the base tuition under the existing structure, in the proposed one, it is asked to pay at least 1.5 times the base tuition. This last feature is added in recognition of the wide differential in mean incomes between students belonging to the ninth and tenth deciles of the income distribution, whether of UP freshmen or of the entire population of Philippine households (See Table 3).

To distinguish the proposed scheme from the existing, we refer to the former as the "alphabetic," and the latter as the "numeric," bracketing scheme. (It should be noted that, since the adjusted tuition fees shall apply only to the entering freshman class, the two STFAP schemes shall be in effect until such time that the cohort of 2006-2007 has graduated.)

In the alphabetic scheme, Bracket A corresponds to the highest socioeconomic bracket and Bracket E the lowest. (Table 2)

Students in the lowest income bracket (E) with annual family incomes of P80,000 or less shall pay no tuition, laboratory and miscellaneous fees and receive a semestral stipend of P12,000, while those in the highest income bracker (A), with annual incomes above P1,000,000, shall pay P1,500 tuition per credit unit on the Diliman, Manila and Los Baños campuses or P1,000 on the Baguio, Visayas and Mindanao campuses.

The distribution of family incomes among admitted freshmen in 2004 is the basis for drawing the boundaries between the socioeconomic brackets.

Assuming that the income profile of entering UP students stays the same as in 2004 (the year for which the UP data cited below are available), close to 80 percent of admitted freshmen will be paying less than the "full cost" of a UP education under the proposed STFAP structure (column 2, Table 3 below); that is, if full cost is defined as P1,000 per unit.

(It should be noted, however, that the income profile is based solely on students' declared incomes and thus are likely to be understated.)

(In fact, full-cost tuition is really closer to P1,500 per unit based on estimates of direct cost of undergraduate instruction at UP [Table 5, Report of ad hoc committee to review tuition and other fees.] This implies that all but the richest 3-5 percent will continue to be subsidized by the state.)

Full discount, stipend

Bracket E students, who will enjoy full discount and a semestral stipend, will comprise more than 20 percent, while a similar percentage will be in Bracket D paying P300 per unit. Only the richest 20 percent will actually be paying the full cost; the greater proportion—about 40 percent—will be paying P600 per unit, or double what they are currently paying.

Since the actual distribution of freshmen entrants may, however, be different from one year to the next depending on various factors (e.g., University of the Philippines Admission Test passing rates, show rates, etc.), a better way to appreciate the new STFAP structure is to see how the proposed brackets map to the national income distribution.

With the new STFAP bracketing scheme, students up to the fourth decile, along with some from the fifth (approximately the 42nd percentile) of the national distribution (refer to column 4), shall be entitled to free tuition and a stipend (Bracket E). Those coming from families in the fifth up to the seventh deciles (approximately the 66th percentile) shall be in Bracket D with a 70-percent discount.

Bracket C with a 40-percent discount includes students from the seventh all the way up to the richest decile of the national distribution. This is because the income profile of UP students (columns 2 and 3) is markedly different from the national distribution (columns 4 and 5). Note that the top three income deciles in the UP distribution belong to the richest decile in the national distribution. In effect, UP students coming from families up to the 97th percentile of the national income distribution (maximum annual family income of P500,000) shall continue to enjoy a tuition subsidy even under the restructured STFAP. Thus, it is accurate to say that only those students who come from the most affluent families will be asked to pay full-cost or near full-cost tuition.

Flesh out mechanism

For reasons of vertical equity, it should not be objectionable then that a bracket (Bracket A) is being included to cover students from the richest percentile(s) who will be assessed 1.5 times the base tuition—although the mechanism for implementing this needs fleshing out.

Table 4 reinforces this point by presenting the national distribution of income by quantiles. As a closer inspection of the national data reveals, the highest income for families in the 19th quantile (or 95th percentile) is less than P500,000, placing students in this income group no higher than Bracket C. This means that the full effect of the proposed hike in UP tuition fees is likely to be felt only by those students whose families belong to the richest 3 percent of the population.

This accounts for approximately 20 percent of UP's entering class going by 2004 data.

Determining eligibility

The determination of whether a student qualifies for a tuition fee discount under STFAP is essentially a problem of determining whether the student's socioeconomic status as measured by family income classifies him or her as being in Brackets C, D or E.

This process is not costless and requires that families at the very least are willing to cooperate with the university in answering very personal questions relating to their finances. It also assumes that the university has the means to verify the information supplied given all the incentives and opportunities of subsidy applicants to conceal or underreport their incomes and assets.

Source: Report of the Committee to Review the STFAP headed by Prof. Edgar Atanacio of the UP College of Engineering.

ON [illegible] THE BOARD OF REGENTS (BOR) OF THE UNIversity of the Philippines approved the proposal to raise tuition and miscellaneous fees starting June 2007.

The increase, the first since 1989, will affect incoming freshmen students.

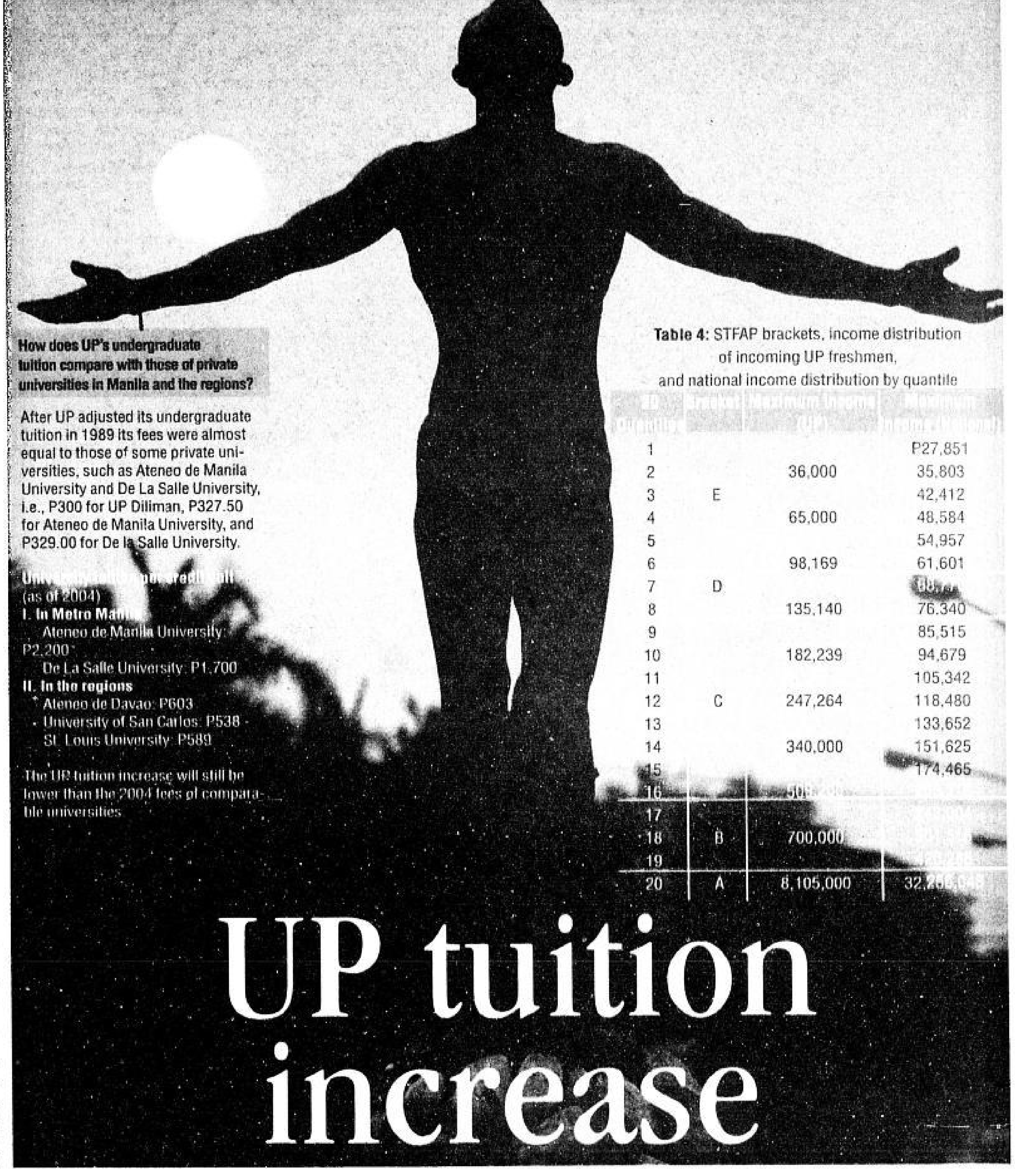
Under the new scheme, the base tuition per unit of an undergraduate course at the state university's campuses in Diliman, Manila and Los Baños will go up to P1,000 from P300. The cost per unit at UP campuses in Baguio, the Visayas and Mindanao will go up to P600 from P200.

Miscellaneous fees will go up to P2,000 from P600 for Diliman, Manila and Los Baños, to P1,405 from P595 for Baguio and the Visayas, and to P1,640 from P510 for Mindanao.

The adjustment merely restores the real value of UP's tuition to its levels in 1989, according to UP president Emerlinda Roman.

The BOR also approved the recommendation to reduce the number of brackets in the Socialized Tuition and Financial Assistance Program from nine to five, and the recommendation to charge students [illegible] P1,500 per unit.

[illegible]



How does UP's undergraduate tuition compare with those of private universities in Manila and the regions?

After UP adjusted its undergraduate tuition in 1989 its fees were almost equal to those of some private universities, such as Ateneo de Manila University and De La Salle University, i.e., P300 for UP Diliman, P327.50 for Ateneo de Manila University, and P329.00 for De la Salle University.

Uni[illegible]redit unit
(as of 2004)

I. In Metro Manila
Ateneo de Manila University: P2,200
De La Salle University: P1,700

II. In the regions
Ateneo de Davao: P603
University of San Carlos: P538
St. Louis University: P589

The UP tuition increase will still be lower than the 2004 fees of comparable universities

Table 4: STFAP brackets, income distribution of incoming UP freshmen, and national income distribution by quantile

[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
1			P27,851
2		36,000	35,803
3	E		42,412
4		65,000	48,584
5			54,957
6		98,169	61,601
7	D		[illegible]
8		135,140	76,340
9			85,515
10		182,239	94,679
11			105,342
12	C	247,264	118,480
13			133,652
14		340,000	151,625
15			174,465
16		[illegible]	[illegible]
17			[illegible]
18	B	700,000	[illegible]
19			[illegible]
20	A	8,105,000	[illegible]

UP tuition increase

Table 5: Entering freshmen in 2004 by income bracket based on declared incomes

Bracket	Diliman	Manila	Los Baños	Baguio	San Fernando	Cebu	Tacloban/Palo	Iloilo/Miagao	Mindanao	Total
A P1,000,000+	172	43	37	13	2	0	1	8	1	277
B P500,001-1,000,000	543	130	257	81	15	19	10	32	12	1,099
C P135,001-500,000	1,107	194	706	217	37	67	99	155	57	2,639
D P80,001-135,000	374	54	257	84	20	44	42	60	28	963
E P0-80,000	504	79	465	143	19	82	105	235	74	1,706
Total	2,700	500	1,722	538	93	212	257	490	172	6,684

Table 1: Existing and proposed tuition fee structure

[illegible]	Proposed	Existing
Base tuition	P1,000 per unit*	P300 per unit**
Number of STFAP brackets	5 (1 non-paying)	9 (5 nonpaying)
Tuition discounts	100, 70, 40 percent	100, 75, 50, 25 percent
Stipend per semester	P12,000	P6,750***
Highest income bracket tuition	1.5 times the base tuition	Base tuition

* Applicable fees in Baguio, San Fernando, Visayas and Mindanao are 60 percent of this.

** Applicable fee in Los Baños is P250 per unit, while P200 for other regional units.

*** This is an average for Brackets 1-4. The amount starts at P8,250 per semester for Bracket 1 and declines to P4,500 per semester for those in Bracket 4.

Table 2: STFAP alphabetic bracketing scheme

Bracket	Annual family income (in pesos)	Per unit tuition Group I	Per unit tuition Group II	Semestral stipend
A	Greater than P1,000,000	P1,500	P1,000	N.A.
B	P500,001 – P1,000,000	P1,000	P600	N.A.
C	P135,001 – P500,000	P600	P400	N.A.
D	P80,001 – P135,000	P300	P200	N.A.
E	P80,000 or less	0	0	P12,000

Group I: Diliman, Manila, Los Baños
Group II: Baguio, Visayas, Mindanao

Table 3: Income distribution of incoming UP freshmen and national income distribution

Income decile	Maximum income of freshmen	Average income of freshmen	Maximum income Philippines	Average income Philippines
Poorest	36,000	13,510	35,803	26,467
Second	65,000	52,187	48,584	42,354
Third	98,169	80,608	61,601	55,052
Fourth	135,140	116,216	76,340	68,863
Fifth	182,239	159,687	94,679	85,391
Sixth	247,264	215,472	118,480	106,029
Seventh	340,000	288,047	151,625	134,473
Eighth	509,200	417,122	203,318	175,784
Ninth	700,000	591,795	301,516	245,939
Richest	8,105,000	1,186,699	32,256,048	545,836

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Bong Pineda wife to run for governor

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

BACOLOR, PAMPANGA—BOARD MEMBER LILIA Pineda said she would face off with reelectionist Gov. Mark Lapid in the May 2007 elections so she could lead Pampanga, the home province of President Macapagal-Arroyo, out of Lapid's "poor leadership."

The governor's father, Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid, was said to have been trying to seek a meeting with Pineda's husband, suspected "jueteng" lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda, in an apparent bid to talk her out of her gubernatorial plan.

Board Member Pineda said she has heard of the senator's request for a meeting but that her plan was hers alone so her husband need not intervene.

The Lapids did not reply to calls seeking a confirmation of the supposed request.

Political observers and officials in the province said the looming fight between Lapid and Pineda would be mainly a battle of resources.

They said Lapid would be banking on show biz popularity and fortune allegedly built from quarry money. They said Pineda, on the other hand, would rely on her husband's wealth, jueteng machinery and influence.

The Lapids have not raised the jueteng issue against the Pinedas.

During the jueteng controversy last year, in which witness Michaelangelo Suze claimed that Board Member Pineda handed money to election officials, Senator Lapid defended the board member from the accusation.

Bong Pineda had denied operating jueteng or owning a license for small town lottery (STL). The Lapids had denied enriching themselves from allegedly stealing quarry taxes.

Pineda's political plan is seen as part, or a result, of the continuing campaign by several Pampanga mayors who broke alliance with the Lapids in November.

They moved to the Kabalikat ng Mamamayang Pilipino (Kampi), Ms Arroyo's political party, after the Lapids turned down a resolution by the Pampanga Mayors League to include last-term mayors in the slate of the administration Lakas-NUCD for board members, adopt non-Lakas mayors and take in PML president and Lubao Mayor Dennis Pineda, the board member's son, as the governor's running mate.

Mayor Pineda has backtracked to give in to his mother's plan.

Board Member Pineda, 55, said she decided to run for governor after hearing the assessment and clamor of local officials and leaders of various sectors.

"They are dismayed by [Lapid's] lack of vision, his inability to manage, his nonpriority on health and other social services, his arrogance toward elected officials. Then there are issues about irregularities in development projects and quarry tax collections," Pineda told the INQUIRER.

In Pineda's consultation here on Thursday, Mayors Francisco Gaddi of Sta. Ana, Arthur Salalila of Sta. Rita, Ricardo Rivera of Guagua, Tirso Lacanilao of Apalit, Romeo Dungca of Bacolor, Pastor Guiao of Magalang and Catalina Bagasina of Sasmuan took turns telling what they perceived to be the shortcomings of Lapid.

At least 1,000 village leaders attended the consultation.

The issues that the mayors raised against Lapid were his nonconvening of the provincial development council where mayors have a say on where the 20 percent development fund should be spent, the alleged irregularities in road-filling projects, quarry tax collections and contracts, and the supposed control of the governor's mother, Marissa, in the capitol's affairs and transactions.

Mayor Pineda disputed Lapid's "*makamasa* (pro-poor)" image in politics and in the movies.

"It's a myth. If he was truly propoor, why did he allow P100 million worth of road-filling projects to become ghost projects? Why has he not used the funds for medical services instead?" Mayor Pineda said.

Like the other mayors, the younger Pineda criticized Lapid for showing his recent films "Batas Militar" and "Tatlong Baraha" in Pampanga's villages.

"Instead of showing us movies, why doesn't he show us his accomplishments?" he said.

Board Member Pineda was introduced during the consultation as "Nanay," in reference to the motherly image she wanted to be known for.

In the interview, she called herself a "hesitant" candidate but said she was convinced she could give Lapid a good fight.

"I've served in the provincial government for five years and I saw his kind of leadership while he was a board member (representing the league of barangays) and as a governor, I tried to understand him at first, pushed him to work well but you see, my patience has also run out," she said.

Police raid Bulacan house used as lab for shabu

CALUMPIT, BULACAN—POLICE on Friday raided a house believed used as a shabu laboratory in Barangay Caniogan here.

Lawyer Joey Quiriones, legal officer of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, said the police and PDEA agents, however, failed to arrest any of at least 17 Chinese seen working in the house the day before the raid.

Recovered from the two-story house were pieces of equipment used in manufacturing between 500 kilograms and a ton of shabu per production, police said.

Quiriones said the laboratory was one of the biggest shabu production areas raided by the police in the country.

He said the house is located in a compound owned by the family of Bulacan prosecutor Cesar Santos along the MacArthur Highway.

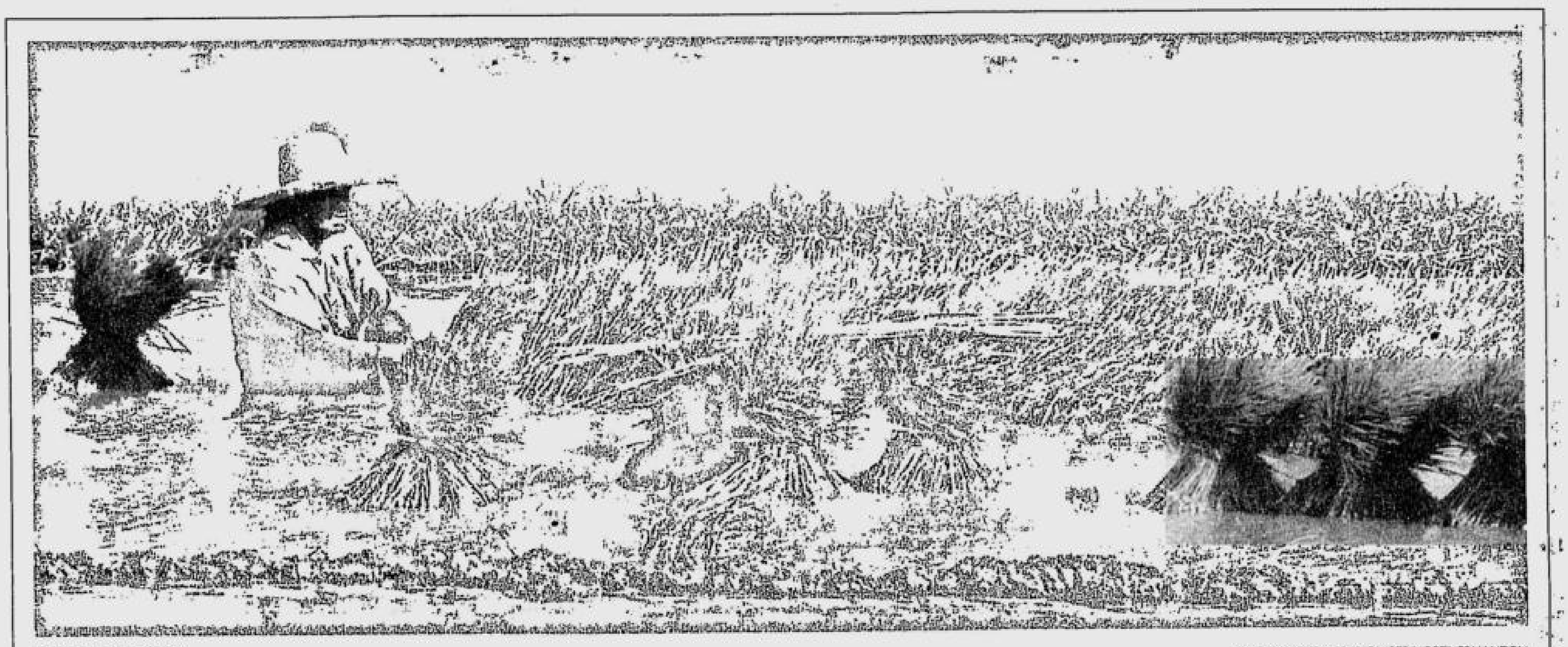
Residents in the area said Santos is not staying at the house and has been living in the City of Malolos.

Quiriones estimated the value of all equipment and materials for manufacturing shabu recovered in the house at P1 billion.

He said they found at least eight huge rotary evaporator machines and at least 100 boxes of liquid and powdered chemicals in the house.

Other chemicals were placed in basins, plastic containers, bottles and sacks. PDEA chemists took samples to determine the chemicals' contents.

Quiriones said among the chemicals they identified were thionil chloride and ephedrine, a major substance in the manufacture of shabu. *Carmela Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon*



TOOTS SOBERANO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

FARM WORK
Women help in preparing rice sapling for a third planting cycle while there is still water for irrigation in Luna, La Union. Weather experts predict an El Niño next year.

Strong waves, winds hamper search for fishermen

DAGUPAN CITY—HUGE WAVES and strong winds in the South China Sea have slowed down the rescue operations for missing fishermen from five coastal towns of Pangasinan and Zambales, according to a task force official coordinating the search.

Army Col. Gregory Cayetano, on-scene commander of Task Force Infanta, said rough seas have significantly increased the sailing time of Navy ships and other vessels involved in the operations, preventing them from covering a wider area.

"It's the weather—waves, wind, visibility, rain and current," Cayetano said.

As a result, he said, the vessels have been consuming more fuel, slowly exhausting the task force's resources.

He said even the Navy ships were no match to the strong waves because they had to be pulled out temporarily to Sual, Pangasinan, and Palauig, Zambales, for repairs.

"What complicates the situation is that we now have a wider search area," Cayetano said.

He said when the disaster took place on Dec. 15, the wind blew from the north and sent all boats still floating at that time to the south and southeast directions.

"But those [boats and fishermen] that sank were swept by the strong undercurrent to the north," Cayetano said.

This is the reason, he said, two bodies were found in Sto. Tomas, La Union, and in Tondaligan Beach in this city.

Another body was also found tied to a boat at least 90 nautical miles from Infanta, Pangasinan.

"Right now, we have a search area covering [the South China Sea] from Currimao (Ilocos Norte) to Lubang Island (in Mindoro)," Cayetano said.

He said what also made the search and rescue operations difficult was that the fishermen went to a fishing ground 70 to 90 nautical miles from the shore "and even beyond the Philippine territorial limits."

Task force officials had to deploy aircraft to search for possible survivors beyond the 35 nautical mile radius that Huey helicopters can reach.

As of 11 a.m. Saturday, the 29 fishermen found stranded in the Scarborough Shoal, some 140 nautical miles from Infanta, have not been brought home yet.

The number of those missing has increased to 55, after one more fisherman from neighboring Sta. Cruz, Zambales, was reported missing to the task force.

At least 133 fishermen have been accounted for, according to Cayetano, and the number include those who were rescued and those who came home on their own.

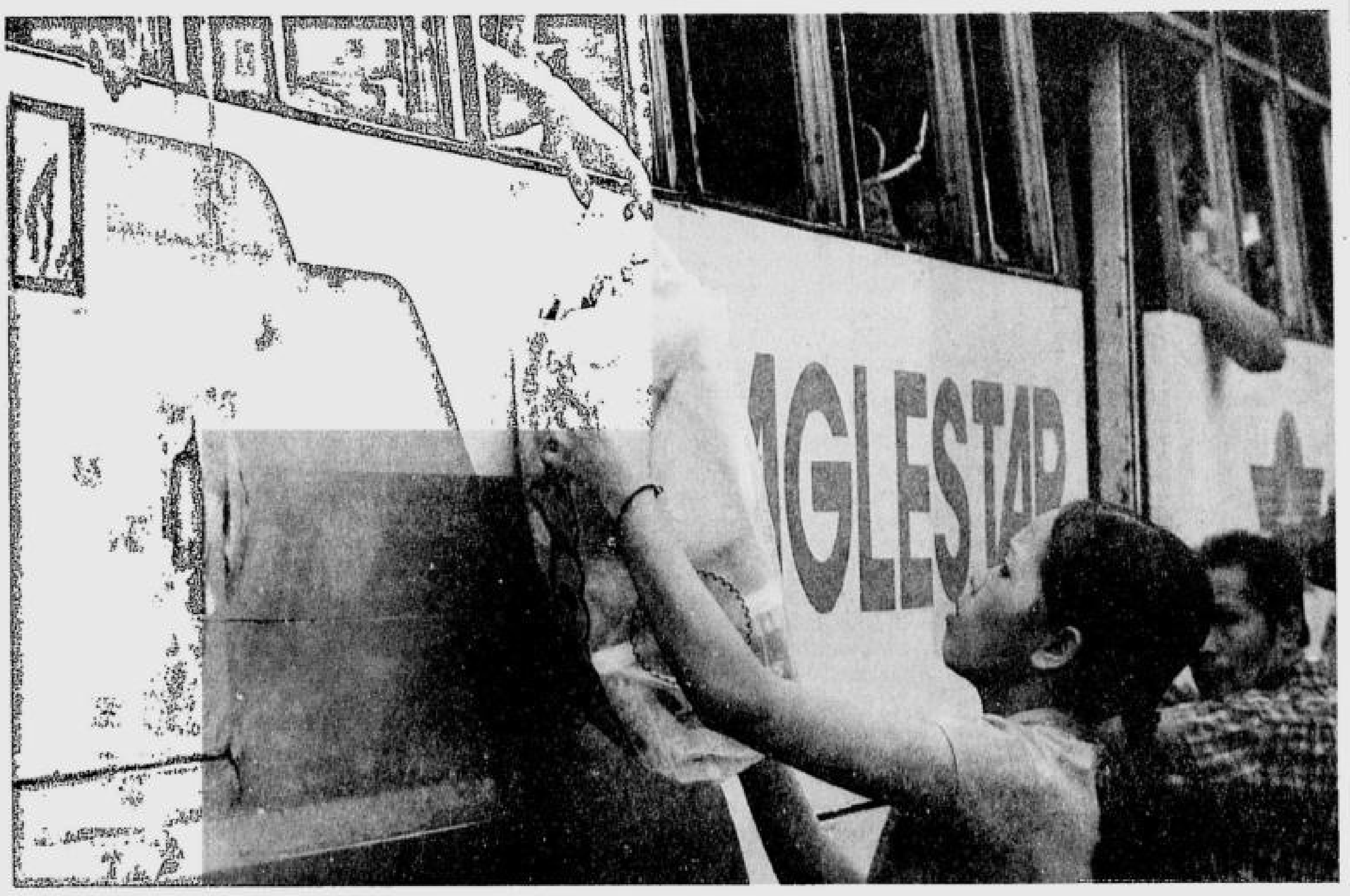
Charlito Maniago, barangay captain of Cato in Infanta, the fishing village where most of the fishing fishermen came, said he is still hopeful that his missing constituents would be found alive.

"I still keep on hoping that somehow they will come home to their families," Maniago said.

Of the 55 fishermen still missing, 24 are from Infanta, four from Agno, 11 from Bolinao, 11 from Dasol, and five from Sta. Cruz, Zambales.

"I hope they were picked up by passing ships and are now somewhere waiting to be returned home," Maniago said.

Three fishermen from Infanta were earlier rescued by a passing United States Navy ship and another three from Bolinao town were picked up by a commercial vessel en route to China. *Gabriel Cardinoza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*



RAFFY LERMA

COMING HOME
Passengers rushing to go home to the provinces for the holidays scramble for seats in buses at a terminal in Cubao, Quezon City.

Diwalwal miners reject entry of foreign firms

DAVAO CITY—SMALL-SCALE miners on Mt. Diwata in Monkayo, Compostela Valley have vowed to oppose a government plan that would allow foreign mining firms into the area.

The Natural Resources Development Corp. (NRDC), the corporate arm of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, said at least 27 foreign firms were being considered for approval in a bid to develop Mt. Diwalwal.

The NRDC said at least P34 billion was needed to mine the site but the small-scale miners or the government could not afford it.

The yield of the 600-meter site was estimated at several billions of dollars.

But Franco Tito, Mt. Diwata village chief, said the entry of foreign mining firms would be tantamount to the dislocation, not only of small-scale miners, but also of the entire population of the area.

At least 40,000 people live on Mt. Diwata, also known as Diwalwal, which earned notoriety in the 1980s because of killings over gold.

In 2002, the government took control of the entire area and regulated the conduct of mining to prevent hostilities between small-scale miners.

Later, the small-scale miners were allowed to continue their activities but under strict government supervision. They were also asked to pay taxes.

"The government lied to us that that they would not allow foreign investors to operate here in Mt. Diwalwal (Diwata)," Tito, a small-scale miner himself, said.

On Thursday, hundreds of miners protested and called on the government to scrap the plan.

"Where will you place them if they lose the only means of income they have known for decades here?" Tito asked.

Tito said they could not understand why the government wanted to allow the entry of foreign firms into Diwalwal when small-scale miners have been "dutiful in giving a fair share to the government in the form of tax." *Dennis Jay C. Santos, Inquirer Mindanao*

INQUIRER Mindanao

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Editor Jun Bandayrel
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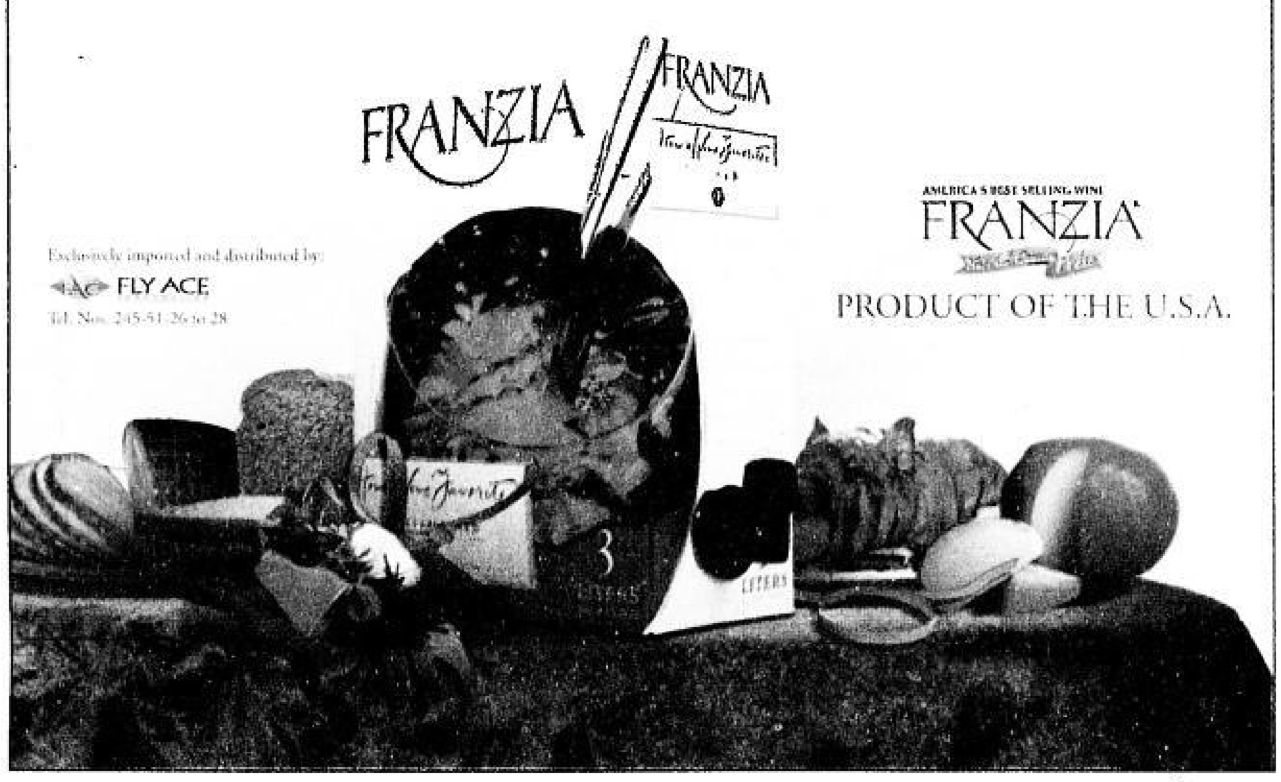

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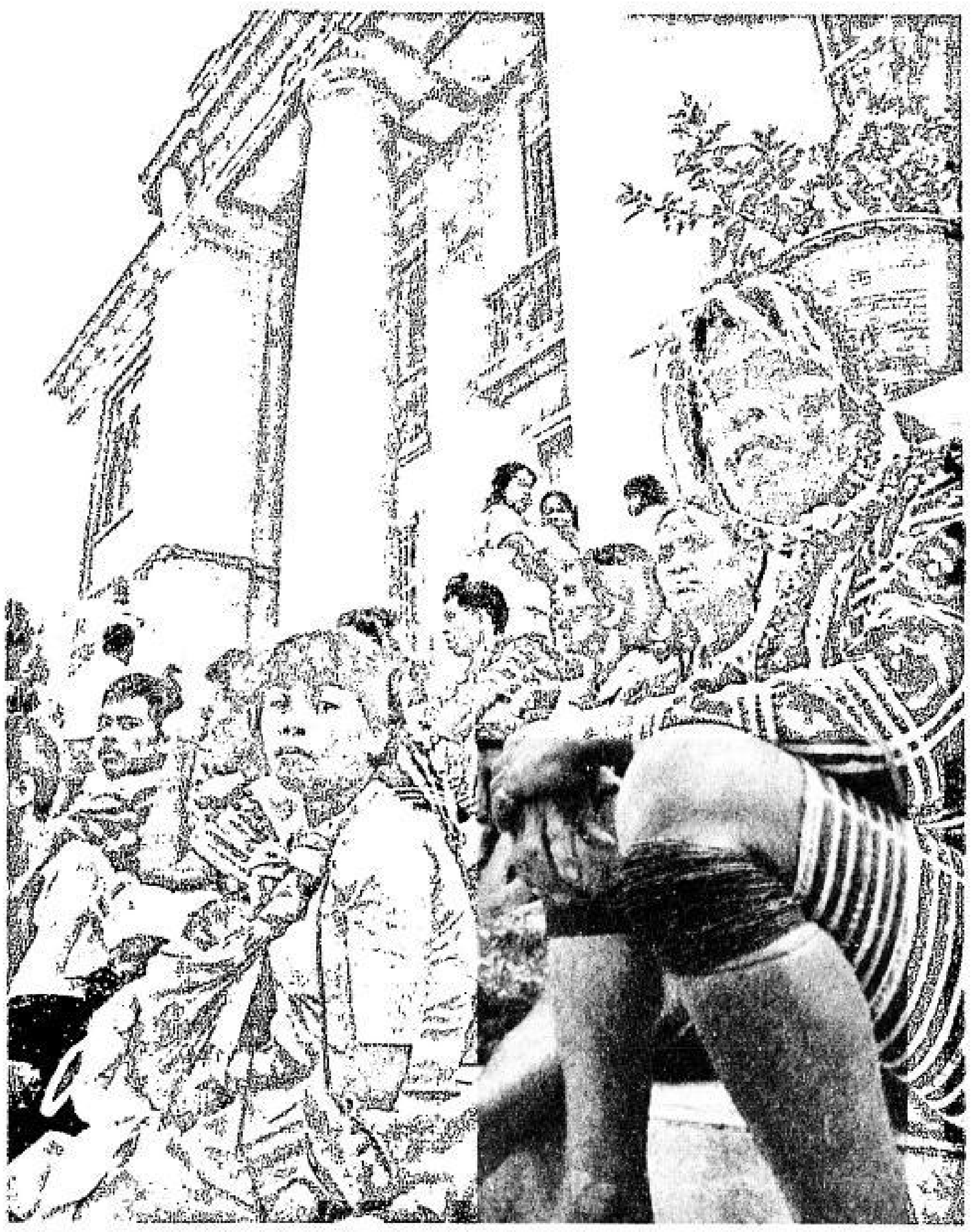


LUMAD folk rest from their carolling in front of the Davao City Hall. BING GONZALES

'Lumad' carolers take to the streets

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Davao City

FROM HER FOREHEAD, beads of sweat flowed down her cheek, touching the pale skin of 8-month-old Rosabel, whose face was pressed hard on her breasts.

Sitting on dry earth, her two other children feasted on a pack of *pancit* (noodles), both lackadaisical, that they had placed the food literally on the ground.

Their mother, 30-year-old Rosalinda Libuan, was unmindful as she consumed another pack she bought from her last P100. Now with less than P100 in her pocket, she appears void of any worries despite not being home, away from her husband and four other children in their village in Davao City's Paquibato District.

Libuan is one of the more than 15,000 *lumad* (indigenous peoples), mostly children, who have descended upon the city since early this month in time for the Christmas season.

On her second day of stay this year, Libuan would roam around the city, her children in tow, knock on the door of every house, especially the lavishly decorated, to beg for gifts—money, clothing, foodstuff, toys and anything considered almost of less use and dispensable.

"We arrived yesterday and so far haven't got anything today. I will start roaming around tomorrow ... perhaps I will also get some clothing and some of the stuff that they got," said Libuan shyly in Cebuano.

Packed gymnasium

Not far from where the Libuans are is the SIR Matina gymnasium, a spacious facility that has lost its grandness and now appears like a huge tin can packed with 3,000 people who have moved in since Dec. 1.

At past 10 a.m., Datu Agsang and his wife Langgat Sayyod said they had not yet eaten breakfast. They were waiting for food ration from the city government.

Once they got hold of their food packs, the couple, elaborately dressed in their native garb, will try to entertain city folks by dancing their traditional dances for a few centavos.

"If they are compassionate enough, perhaps they will give us more than a few centavos. Perhaps they will give us food, clothing or medicines which we don't have. That's all we need. If they don't give us anything, it's OK. If they will give us some, we will be very happy ... it's Christmas anyway," Sayyod said in Cebuano.

"If we don't do this, how will we be able to buy salt?" she added.

Looking exactly like an evacuation center from afar and smelling just like one, the gymnasium tells of disheartening and joyful stories about the people who temporarily seek shelter in it—the same people who, according to some critics, have lost their sense of self and culture to something alien, not part of *lumad* culture, like Christmas.

When they arrived in waves, the Barangay Cultural Communities and Affairs Division (BCCAD) of the office of Davao Mayor Rodrigo Duterte has been providing them food, including a kilo of rice, four packs of noodles and a few cans of sardines.

They also go around the city for their "*panaygon*" (caroling).

In Bangkerohan, the gymnasium is also congested with around 1,200 tribal families. Five women have already given birth there, according to barangay chair Edgar Ibuyan. A mother from Agusan, however, lost her baby in a vehicular accident somewhere in Bunawan, reports said.

Roy Rigor, coordinator of BCCAD, said other housing areas for the *lumad* were congested, too. The city government has also designated temporary shelters in the villages of Bunawan, Tibungco, Calinan and Toril.

Some of the arrivals are from as far as Talaingod in Davao del Norte, the Agusan provinces, and Bukidnon, while others belong to cultural communities within the Davao territories.

Doubled

This year, Rigor said, the number of families nearly doubled compared to last year. In 2005, he said, the figure only reached 1,800, while latest city records showed at least 3,500.

"We decided to stop the listing and the distribution of the tickets (for the food packs). We are still distributing food but not the tickets. And some of the *lumad* have become so shrewd that we have difficulty identifying them," he said.

Last week, Rigor said, at least 200 families left Bankerohan. "We thought they have left for home only to learn later that they just transferred to Bunawan."

Health officials reported several cases of diseases in the centers. For the SIR-Matina group alone, at least 20 people, mostly children, had sore eyes, diarrhea, skin rashes, colds, cough and fever.

Diseases

"We can no longer prevent these diseases from occurring because of the situation. It's congested here and sanitation is really a problem. Children are most of the time vulnerable to these diseases," Dr. Joy Cunanan said.

According to a critic, the *panaygon* has been stripped of its real meaning and, in fact, has desecrated the culture and dignity of the *lumad*.

"We don't celebrate Christmas as much as we don't observe days and months," said Jose Amban, an officer of the consultative body of the National Commission for the Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) and past president of the Ata Tribal Association of Davao Inc. (Atadi).

"What the *lumad* now are doing is really demeaning to the culture and to themselves as persons," he said. They are not doing the *panaygon* but begging, he said.

"Everything about us is supposed to be sacred—our dances, clothes, the instruments we use, and we just don't perform dances because we want to beg for a few centavos," he said.

Amban has been urging other tribal leaders to discourage their people from going to the city streets every Christmas season.

"We have to preserve the culture which is so rich and so beautiful. We have to protect it because it is our identity. I have been telling them to till their lands and be contented with what they have instead of going to the city and beg," he said.

Bayan Muna says 15 of its members are dead men walking

LUCENA CITY—AT LEAST 15 leftist activists from Sorsogon province are marked for assassination by a military-backed death squad, the leftist group Bayan Muna said.

Robert De Castro, Bayan Muna national deputy secretary general, said the group got the information from "sympathetic allies within the AFP."

He said the 15 would be killed in retaliation for the assassination by communist rebels of Capt. Patrick Baeza, an intelligence officer of the Philippine Army's 901st Infantry Brigade.

Baeza was shot dead in Irosin town last Nov. 27.

Baesa, a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, was on a surveillance operation in one of the rural villages when the rebels shot him at close range.

De Castro said the military vowed to avenge the death of Baeza.

"But it is the legal and unarmed activists who always bear the brunt from the retaliation of state security forces every time an NPA kills one of their men," De Castro said.

On Friday, Francisco Bantog, chair of Bayan Muna-Sorsogon, was shot dead by three armed men in Barangay Dancalan in Donsol, Sorsogon.

Bantog was the third militant leader killed in the province by motorcycle-riding gunmen in just two weeks.

Activist Cris Frivaldo and human rights lawyer Gil Gojol were earlier gunned down separately in Irosin and Gubat towns.

"They already felled three of us in Sorsogon, the cold-blooded bastards will try to kill 12 more from among the activist ranks in the province," said De Castro.

Bantog was the 120th Bayan Muna member and the 793rd leftist activist killed under the Arroyo administration, according to De Castro.

De Castro said Bayan Muna was not taking extra caution and implementing security measures to protect its members. He did not elaborate.

"For every fallen martyr, hundreds of others will stand to take his place...," De Castro said.

De Castro identified the provinces of Sorsogon, Isabela and Cagayan as the target areas of operation by military-backed death squads.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered police to stop the killings, but the murders continued.

The top official of the national police also warned that chiefs of police would be relieved if they failed to prevent the murder of leftist activists.

The military has come under fire for the string of assassinations and abductions of journalists and leftists activists, mostly in the provinces.

Military authorities, however, denied they were behind the killings. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

BARGAIN SHOP
Baguio families, who are short of cash, have proceeded to the city's bargain houses (*wagwag* shops) for gifts. These young girls enjoyed the trip, because most of the shops have a rich menu of secondhand toys imported from Asian countries. EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

2,000 Army men register as voters in Cebu

By Jolene R. Bulambot
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—AT LEAST 2,000 SOLDIERS from the Central Command, Naval Forces Central and the Philippine Air Force have registered at the Commission on Elections (Comelec) as voters in Cebu.

Clad in their uniforms, the soldiers were brought to the Comelec offices in the cities of Cebu and Lapu-lapu by military trucks in batches.

Col. Jefferson Omandam, Centcom spokesperson, said all soldiers assigned in Central Command and other units based in Cebu were directed to register so they could vote in the 2007 elections.

Omandam said a survey conducted by the Armed Forces of the Philippines showed that very few soldiers exercise their right to vote citing failure to register as the main reason.

Only 30 percent of the more than 1,000 organic members of Centcom were able to vote in the 2001 elections, he added.

"The statistics we are referring to is about the random survey that we conducted. It indicates that the turnout is very, very low, so since this is being mandated by the Constitution, all of us must carry out this task and responsibility with gusto," Omandam said.

The mass registration became necessary after Centcom received the results of the random survey they conducted several months ago, he added.

This is also the first time that soldiers have been encouraged by Centcom to register and vote in the elections, Omandam further said.

"We are trying to hit 100 percent target. It is our duty as citizen of this country to participate in the elections by casting our votes. In Central Command, we already gave the go signal," he said.

Capt. Ferdinand Orata, of the 2nd Tactical Operations Wing of the Philippine Air Force based on Mactan Island, denied that the mass registration of soldiers was ordered by Malacañang.

Orata said the AFP is an independent and an apolitical institution and has been urging soldiers to act as models by exercising their right to vote.

Orata said the PAF in Mactan had been closely coordinating with the Lapu-lapu City Comelec since November.

So far, more than 1,000 PAF personnel had registered already, he said.

Lt. Jr. Grade Alex Garso, meanwhile, told the Inquirer that Navforcen had been given the guidance to direct its personnel to register.

At least 90 Navy men had already registered.

"It's not really a Malacañang backed-order. There is no truth to that. We are here to exercise our rights. It is our duty to vote. Although this is the first time that there is mass registration but there is nothing new to this because soldiers have been voting in the past elections," he said. Comelec regional director Manuel Advincula said there are more than 2 million registered voters in Cebu in the 2001 election.

Advincula said the Comelec expects an increase of 10 percent in the number of voters.

33 Samar guerrillas surrender

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—AT LEAST 33 members of the New People's Army based in a Samar town surrendered this week to the military.

The rebel returnees told the military they decided to surrender due to the hardship they experienced in the mountains.

"According to them, they were already tired of their life in the mountains. They want to have a normal life and return to the mainstream society," Lt. Col. Jonathan Ponce, 62nd Infantry Battalion commanding officer, said.

Ponce said that the rebel returnees also turned over 34 various short and long firearms when they surrendered on Dec. 17 at the Army headquarters in Calbiga town, 61 km from here.

Ponce also cited their continued military operations against members of the NPA, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, as the other reason the rebels decided to surrender.

He said that the 33 NPA members surrendered en masse.

"But there were negotiations between us before we considered their decision to surrender," Ponce said.

The former rebels were operating in the mountains of Villareal, considered by the military as one of the towns in Samar where communist guerrillas operate heavily.

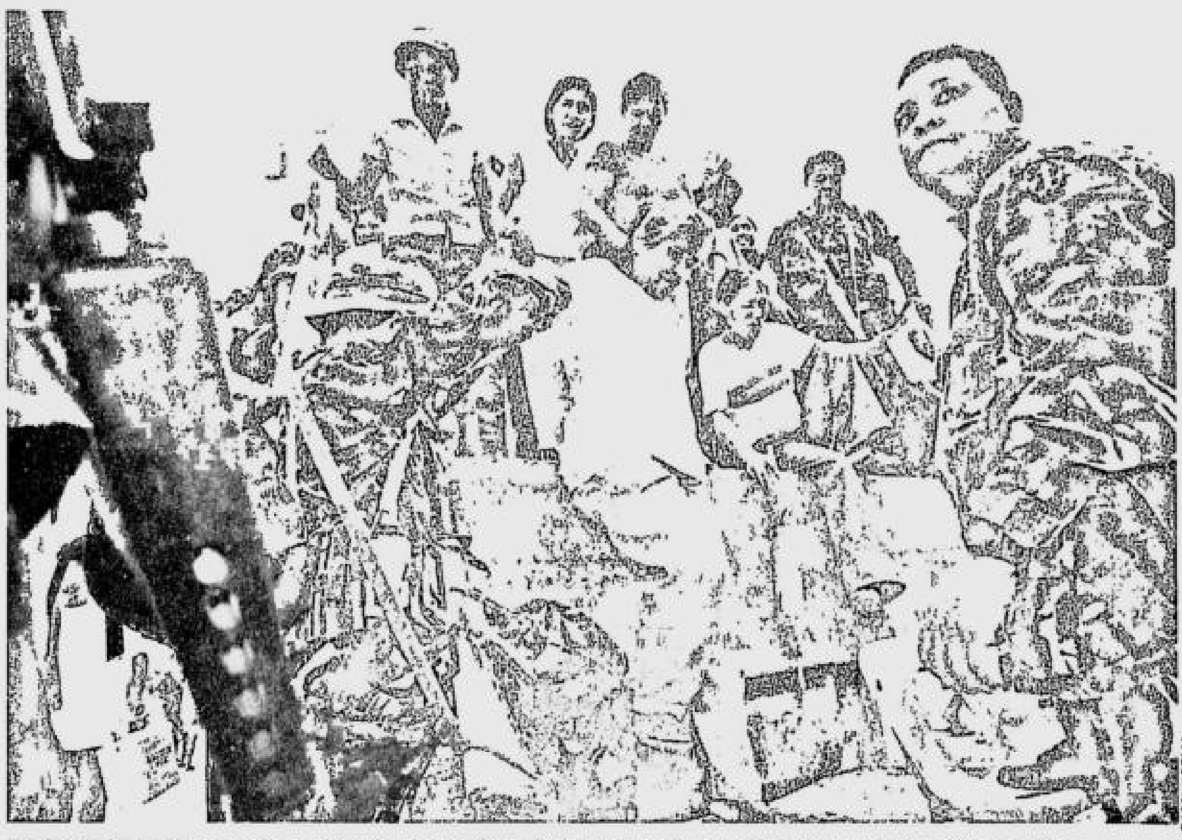
"We consider their surrender as a victory as we continue in our relentless campaign to end the insurgency problem in the entire Eastern Visayas region," Ponce said.

The former NPA members, after undergoing debriefing, were inducted as members of the Civilian Volunteers Organization (CVO), a group organized by the military during the time of controversial Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, former commanding general of the 8th Infantry Division.

The current commanding general of the division is Maj. Gen. Rodrigo Maclang.

The CVO was created by the military in the barangay level as a force to counter communist rebels.

The 33 former NPA members were said to be residents of Barangays Inasudlan and Sta. Rosa, both in Villareal town.



RAFFY LERMA

THE MILITARY campaign against communist rebels is relentless and has taken various forms, like gathering people like these villagers in Quezon province in an anti-communist rally in Catanuan, Quezon.

Key bridge in Sorsogon in danger of collapsing

SORSOGON CITY—AT LEAST 11 towns and the city of Sorsogon might be isolated from Luzon as the bridge connecting them to the rest of the country is now in danger of collapse as a result of the successive typhoons that hit the province, an official of the Department of Public Works and Highways here said.

The Cawayan Bridge at Barangay Basud here, which lies along the national highway, also serves the Luzon-Visayas-Mindanao route.

Romeo Doloiras, acting district engineer, said the flash floods spawned by Supertyphoons "Milenyo" and "Reming" had destroyed the consolidation dam that protected the bridge's footings.

As a result, the bridge's footings and foundation were scoured, and are now exposed, he explained.

The DPWH had limited its load capacity from 15 tons down to 5 tons to prevent its collapse, Doloiras said.

Built in 1978, the Cawayan Bridge spans 155 meters and lies along the Maharlika Highway, which is the province's only access to mainland Luzon.

It's also the only access of vehicles from the Visayas and Mindanao via land transportation and vice versa.

Doloiras said the DPWH already submitted a report to the Department of Public Works and Highways and requested P10 million for the bridge's immediate repair.

The DPWH official estimated that the government would need at least P90 million for the construction of a new bridge, should the existing one collapse, not to include the economic losses and inconvenience it would cause to the public.

Meanwhile, residents of Barangay Basud attributed the bridge's dangerous situation to the unabated quarrying within the one-kilometer prohibited area upstream and downstream.

Some residents of the village have already filed a complaint at the Sangguniang Panlalawigan against those involved in the quarrying.

The provincial board has already conducted a committee hearing but it has yet to finalize its findings, although some sources said some local contractors were among those identified as involved in the illegal extraction of quarry materials at the Cawayan River.

The Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Offices of the local government unit has been helpless in stopping the illegal quarrying operations. *Bobby Q. Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Subic resort owners want fish cages in Zambales removed quickly

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE SUBIC Bay Resorts Association (Subra) opposed the appeal of the Subic Fish Cages Operators Association (Sufcopas) to the Environmental Management Bureau to defer the agency's cease-and-desist order on fish cages until February 2007.

The lawyer of Subra, Agustin Chan, registered the opposition in a hearing held at the EMB Central Luzon office here.

Chan said he learned of the extension request by Sufcopas only in Wednesday's hearing on Subra's motion for execution of the order dated Aug. 29.

Sufcopas president Danilo Avila sought the extension in a Sept. 11 letter to EMB Regional Director Lormelyn Claudio.

Avila cited the need of members for "ample time to harvest our fish" in cages in 22 hectares of the municipal waters of Subic, Zambales.

It was not known if Claudio approved or turned down the request. She was out of her office on Wednesday, attending a meeting of EMB regional directors in Quezon City, a member of her staff said.

Claudio did not reply to INQUIRER's calls and text messages. The hearing officer declined to give an official statement on the action taken by Claudio pending the latter's clearance.

Subra's motion filed on Nov. 23 indicated that the EMB by then had failed to fully enforce its own order. According to the group, some companies "continued to operate and even built new fish cages clearly in defiance of the said Order to the damage and prejudice of the complainants."

The complainants include Zambales Vice Gov. Ramon Lacbain II, Mark Figueras of the Samahang Pinagkaisa sa Pangisdaan ng Olongapo, Subic at San Antonio (Sap-Sap), Amethya de la Llana of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority's ecology department and Senior Insp. Adriano Adsuara of the maritime police.

Chan said the EMB has no basis to give due course to the appeal of Sufcopas because the order was in itself final and executory.

The order gave the operators seven days to dismantle the cages and to resume only when they have secured environmental clearance certificates (ECCs) from the EMB. The order also warned of legal actions for non-compliance.

Sufcopas reported that as of Dec. 18, Sea Horse Aqua Farms reduced its fish cages from 60 to 45; Sahara from 40 to 18; JP to one hectare; and Saka from 120 to 14. Golden Aqua Harvest and Biotop reported "no operation."

The hearing officer said these pieces of information, including inquiries on the continuing aqua-culture activities, have to be verified by actual visits to the sites. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

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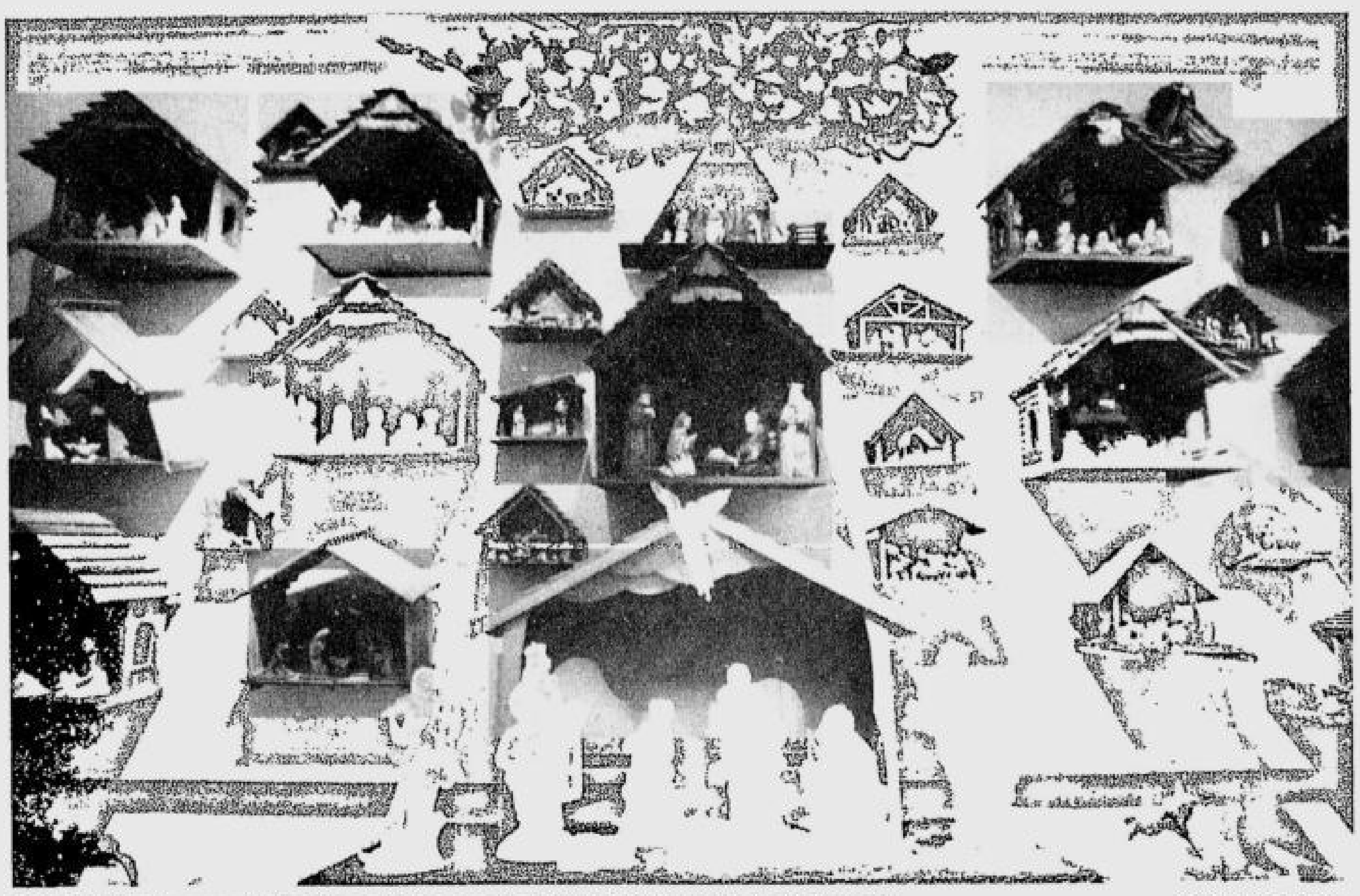
Marikina's many versions of the Nativity

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.



THE BELEN Museum in Marikina City is home to 376 depictions of the Nativity scene.

PHOTOS BY RAFFY LERMA

INSIDE the museum, it is Christmas all year long, says Marikina City cultural officer Rizza Antonio.

WITH MORE THAN 300 DEpictions of the Nativity scene, the Belen Museum in Marikina City does not need any additional holiday trimmings.

In fact, every day feels like Christmas in this place.

"We want our people to feel the spirit of Christmas not only in December but every day of the year, especially when they enter the museum," Marikina City cultural officer Rizza Antonio told the INQUIRER.

The museum inside the Department of Education building in Marikina City is a testament to one woman's devotion to the joy of Christmas.

Different colors and sizes

Owned by Carmen Carlos, an aunt of Marikina City Mayor Marides Fernando, the Belen come in different colors and sizes—ranging from a life-size version done in papier mache to one that is so small it can fit inside a jewelry box roughly the size of one's hand.

There are paintings and dioramas as well as miniature artworks inside matchboxes. The pieces hang on the museum's pink wall and rest on a three-level display rack in the small air-conditioned room. Some are arranged in small triangular wooden frames set up to resemble a Christmas tree or—in the case of especially delicate ones made of crystal, silver or glass—placed inside three glass cabinets.

The traditional Belen, a popular Christmas decor, depicts the birth of Jesus Christ in a manger, surrounded by his parents Mary and Joseph and the three Wise Men.

Most of the pieces were given to Carlos by friends, Antonio said.

International flavor

They come from various parts of the world. There is one set that shows a Filipino Nativity scene, the carved wooden figures wearing a G-string, Barong Pilipino and *baro't saya*, and there are also dioramas with Chinese-like figures.

Antonio said her favorite was the one Carlos bought in Africa. The dark-skinned figures are made of wood.

Though the Belen are made of different materials, they share one message: The coming of the Lord.

On the wall are paintings on canvases or ceramic plates. There are also framed cross-stitch and crocheted items.

Some pieces are carved out of whole blocks of wood and stone. The tableaus consist of three or more pieces made of every conceivable material—clay, glass, ceramic, wood, fiber glass, plastic, resin, cloth, used sacks, even copper wire and candles.

There is also a set of candle holders, each painted to look like a character in the Belen. There is a diorama of glass figurines lit by small electric bulbs.

And there's even a Belen made of keys. Carlos said it was a gift from artist Fernando Sena. The keys were arranged to resemble Jesus, Mary, Joseph and the Magi. For the sheep, the keys were adorned with yellow paper clips.

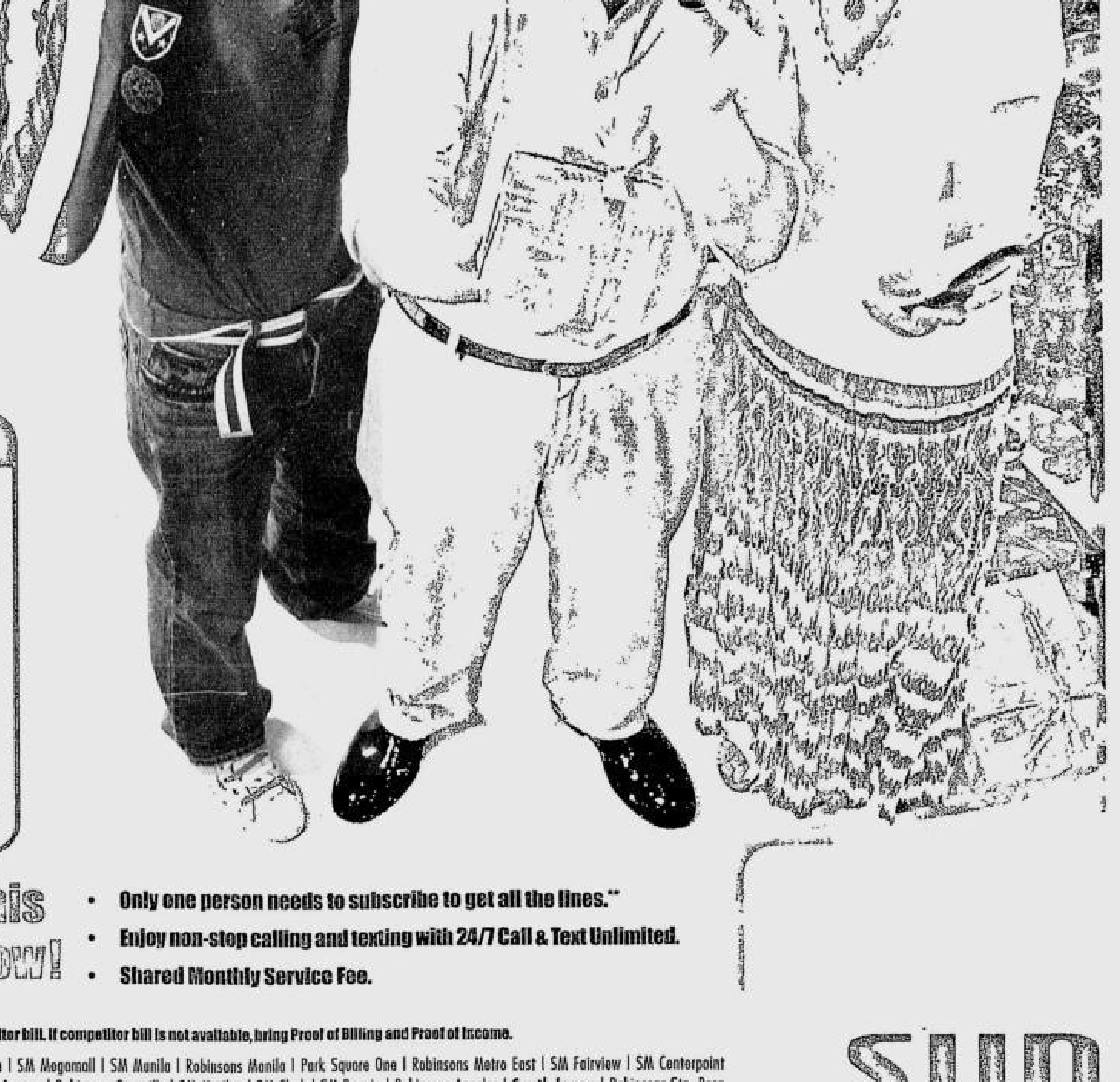
One Belen is made of small figures cut from iron sheets then painted.

The one Carlos got from Zambales, Antonio said, was made of ash fall which came from Mount Pinatubo.

But perhaps one of the most memorable in the collection is a diorama of at least 14 figures made of plastic arranged inside a miniature wooden hut. This was the first of Carlos' growing collection which already numbers over 500, Antonio said.

Carlos bought her first Belen in a religious shop when she was just a high school freshman in 1955. The Belen cost

MARIKINA'S/ A18



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Animal lover has furry Merry Christmas

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A FEW WEEKS BEFORE CHRISTMAS, animal lovers got an urgent e-mail about a dedicated rescuer of abandoned cats who needed help bringing her beloved pets to her new home in another part of the country.

TALES OF THE CITY

Melinde Delfin, a 61-year-old single mother, had decided to leave her Laguna home and move to Cebu City where she had been given an opportunity to revive her teaching career.

Taking her four grown-up children was not a problem, but Delfin needed a staggering amount to transport her 49 cats and three dogs to Cebu.

"Leaving them was not an option," Delfin told the INQUIRER in an interview at the Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) rehabilitation center in Quezon City.

She could not imagine abandoning the cats or having them adopted, as friends and colleagues had suggested.

"These animals have become part of my family. Why adopt them in the first place, only to leave them to die in the end?" Delfin said.

MELINDE Delfin, an animal lover, bonds with her cats, mostly strays which she took in.

PHOTOS BY RODEL ROTONI

The teacher, who transferred with her family to Laguna from Cebu 27 years ago, began rescuing stray cats as soon they moved into their new house.

"The subdivision was new, so there were a lot of vacant lots where cats roamed," Delfin recalled. She said her children were also active in the rescue activities.

THE DELFINS have 49 cats and three dogs.

Over the years, the Delfins saved at least 200 cats and a number of dogs.

"(There were) tears when the old ones left us," she said. The furry members of the Delfin family who passed on were buried in the flower garden and remembered with "fondness and love."

Delfin recalled how she cried when one of the family's beloved canines, Princess Doggie, died of old age earlier this year.

Five years ago, she heard the dog barking from a manhole a couple of blocks away from their house. "I did not see what it was, I could only hear barks," Delfin said. Eight days later, she found the dog lying in front of their home.

"We found out through our veterinarian that Princess Doggie was blind and deaf," she said. "How she managed to follow me home was beyond me."

Delfin said that even though their dogs—Sasha, a Labrador retriever; Aki, a golden retriever; and Ford, a native dog adopted from PAWS—hold special places in their hearts because of their unconditional love and loyalty, they also showered their cats with the same amount of love.

"Most people do not think much of native cats, treating them like worthless garbage," she said sadly.

Delfin, who inherited her affection for cats from her grandmother and mother, stressed that animals should be loved and cared for.

"I get really sad when they look at me with their big eyes and I see how helpless they are," she said.

Delfin said all the family cats have their own special areas in the house. They are treated equally and given adequate water and food.

The cats reciprocate her love in their own simple ways. A purr of contentment or an affectionate brush against her leg are enough to make her day, Delfin said with a smile.

An amazing story involving one of her cats reminded Delfin how important—and rewarding—her mission was.

Toby came to the Delfin family when his original owner, a Puerto Rican diplomat, left the country years ago.

"He was a very antisocial cat, preferring to stay all day under the bed," Delfin said, smiling fondly.

Toby was later given to her daughter Lori Beatrice, who lived in an apartment with her husband and 3-year-old son Andre.

Delfin recalled how one day, Toby woke Lori up at 3 a.m., determinedly scratching her until her leg bled.

Wondering what the cat was up to, Lori followed an agitated Toby to her son's room.

When she opened the door, she was shocked to see that a fire caused by an overheated industrial fan had spread to her son's rubber mat and had almost reached a sleeping Andre.

"If not for Toby, Andre would have perished in that fire," Delfin said with a shudder. Andre is now 7 years old.

This incident, plus a thousand fond memories of her pets, led Delfin to seek help from various people and organizations so she could take the animals with her to Cebu.

"We were losing hope because Christmas Day was fast approaching and nobody seemed to be interested in helping us," Delfin said. Most people she had approached did not care for cats.

"All I wanted was for us to spend Christmas together as a big family, like we always have," she added.

But a week before Christmas, Delfin got her wish. Officials of the animal welfare group Compassion and Responsibility for Animals (Cara) pledged to take care of the cats' vaccination expenses and provided the cages for their transport.

Many animal lovers, who responded to the e-mail telling Delfin's story, gave at least P10,000 for the transportation expenses, enough to bring all the cats to Cebu.

"The kindhearted donors told me they would not want us to be separated this Christmas," Delfin said, teary-eyed.

She stressed that her animal rescue activities would continue in Cebu.

"I am planning to put up a facility near our new home where abandoned cats could take refuge," Delfin said, adding that she would also encourage her neighbors to volunteer for the special mission.

She said she would also spearhead a census to help regulate the number of pets in the area.

"Hopefully, the idea would spread to neighboring areas and, eventually, the rest of the country," Delfin said.

But, at the moment, she said she was simply happy to get her Christmas wish: To spend a warm, furry Christmas with her children—humans and nonhumans.

NBI starts investigating killing of ex-policeman

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI) has begun probing the case of a former Manila policeman who was shot to death in the parking lot of a mall in Malate, Manila late Friday afternoon.

NBI Deputy Director for Regional Operations Services (ROS) Reynaldo Esmeralda said he has assigned the case to the bureau's National Capital Region (NCR) Office for further investigation.

Esmeralda said victim Edgardo Castro, 55, of BF Resort Village, Las Piñas City, had been connected with the controversial Presidential Anti-Illegal Recruitment Task Force headed by former Philippine Overseas Employment Administration director Reynaldo Jaylo.

Castro was also detailed as a special investigator at the NBI when it was still headed by Alfredo Lim who is now a senator, Esmeralda said.

Castro's alleged companion, Armando Landar, 40, of Sta. Ana, Manila, was also killed in the same incident. He was declared dead on arrival at the Ospital ng Maynila due to a gunshot wound in the head.

Initial investigation conducted by the Manila Police District (MPD) showed that Castro and Landar had just alighted from separate vehicles at the Harrison Plaza parking lot at around 5:40 p.m. when an unidentified man approached them.

Police said Landar tried to help when the suspect and Castro grappled with each other. However, a second suspect appeared out of nowhere and shot the victims in the head.

Esmeralda said he may have seen the gunman before the incident while he was having lunch at the coffee shop of the nearby Century Park Hotel.

"I saw a suspicious individual wearing an orange baseball cap who seemed to be looking for someone at the smoking area," Esmeralda added.

The NBI official added that Castro usually sat at the smoking area whenever he met with colleagues.

Esmeralda said he would ask the hotel for copies of footages taken by its close-circuit television that could lead to the identification of the suspect.

"We would then ask the witnesses, one of whom was a parking boy who asked for a Christmas tip from the gunman, to identify the individual in the video," he added.

Man holds boy hostage in church

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A STROLL IN FRONT OF A CHURCH IN LAS Piñas City became a nightmare for a 4-year-old boy and his aunt when a man, believed to be under the influence of drugs, held the youngster hostage inside the church yesterday.

The boy, who suffered a cut in the shoulder, was rushed to the Las Piñas District Hospital two hours after the suspect, Danilo Hemo, was disarmed by a policeman who pretended to be a priest, said Insp. Ferjen Torred, chief of the criminal investigation division.

The victim and his 22-year-old aunt, Kristine Libria, were resting on a bench on the grounds of the St. Joseph Parish Church, home of the world-famous Bamboo Organ, at around 9:30 a.m. when the suspect grabbed the boy and dragged him inside the church.

The aunt and nephew had dropped by the church to check out the Christmas booths set up in the compound, Torred told the INQUIRER.

Wielding a nine-inch kitchen knife, Hemo brought the child to the altar, sending churchgoers praying the novena scurrying toward the exit.

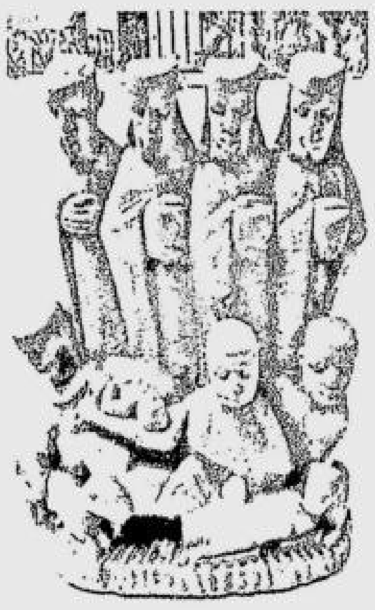
The Special Weapons and Tactics team and policemen from the Police Community Precinct-1 rushed to the scene after Libria called for help.

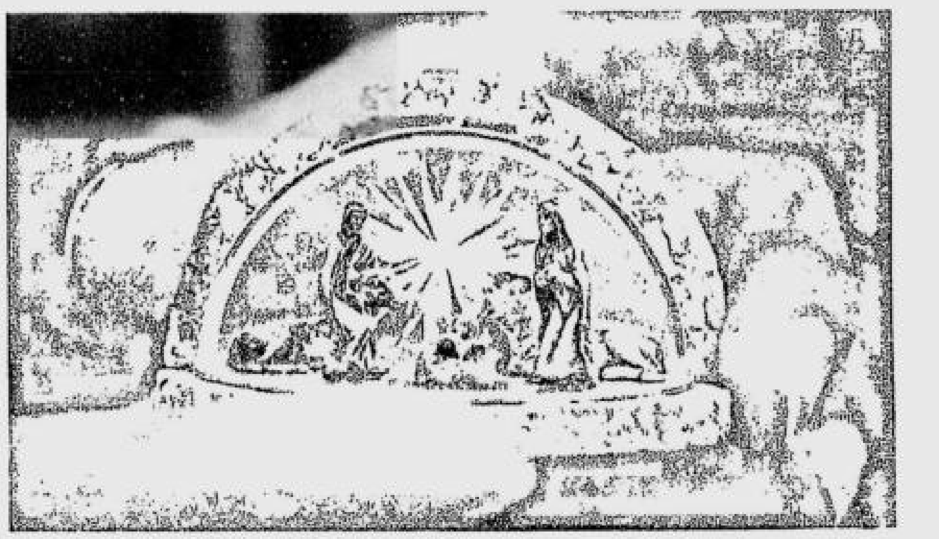
"I tried to pacify him by talking in Bisaya. I wanted him to feel that I was a friend," said Torred, who led the negotiation with the help of a priest, Rev. Greg Garcia.

Torred said the suspect appeared to be under the influence of drugs. "He said there was someone who wanted to kill him, the next, he was saying that he has personal problems," Torred told the INQUIRER.

The boy was rescued after PO3 Joel Cambi, disguised as a priest, entered the church and swiftly disarmed the suspect.

Hemo will face charges of attempted homicide at the city prosecutor's office.





CARMEN Carlos, the owner of the pieces inside the museum, says she started her collection because she likes Christmas. Some of her Belen are big (below) while some can fit in the palm of one's hand.

Marikina's many versions . . .

From page A17

her less than P100, but it started a passion she would pursue for the next half a century.

When the INQUIRER first featured the collection in 1987, Carlos already had about 60 Belen.

That year, thanks to the help of a friend—the late Aleli Vengua whose miniature collection is displayed in the room in front of the Belen Museum—Carlos started an annual "open house" to show her "treasure" to friends.

Gifts from friends

Friends who learned about her passion gave her more Belen and her collection grew.

"I like the Belen because I like Christmas," Carlos, now over 70, told an arts management student in an interview earlier this year.

Fascinated with the collection, Jemma Emerald Zafra, who graduated from the University of the Philippines-Manila in October, did a thesis on the museum.

Zafra, who trained at the museum, wrote in her thesis that Carlos found a home for her collection after a casual talk with her niece, the mayor. They wanted more people to enjoy the collection.

The museum formally opened two days before Christmas last year, Antonio said. It opened to the public the following month.

But in August, the room had to be closed for renovation after it was found that termites had destroyed the wooden beams.

Christmas opening

The museum finally reopened last month, in time for Christmas, Antonio added.

Visitors have to pay an entrance fee of P30 but 52-year-old Winnie Oiden, museum caretaker, said the collection was well worth the price.

"There is a different feeling once you get inside. The artworks are just beautiful. We are proud of this collection," Oiden told the INQUIRER.

She can describe each of the pieces on display, apparently having learned from Carlos, who visits the museum every now and then to bring new pieces.

Antonio said Carlos hopes to bring her entire collection to the museum eventually. But the museum would need a bigger space for. that on the upper floor of the building.

Still, in its current home, the sight of so many Belen is more than enough to remind people that Christmas is not just about parties and gifts but the birth of a child who would forever change the world.

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to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

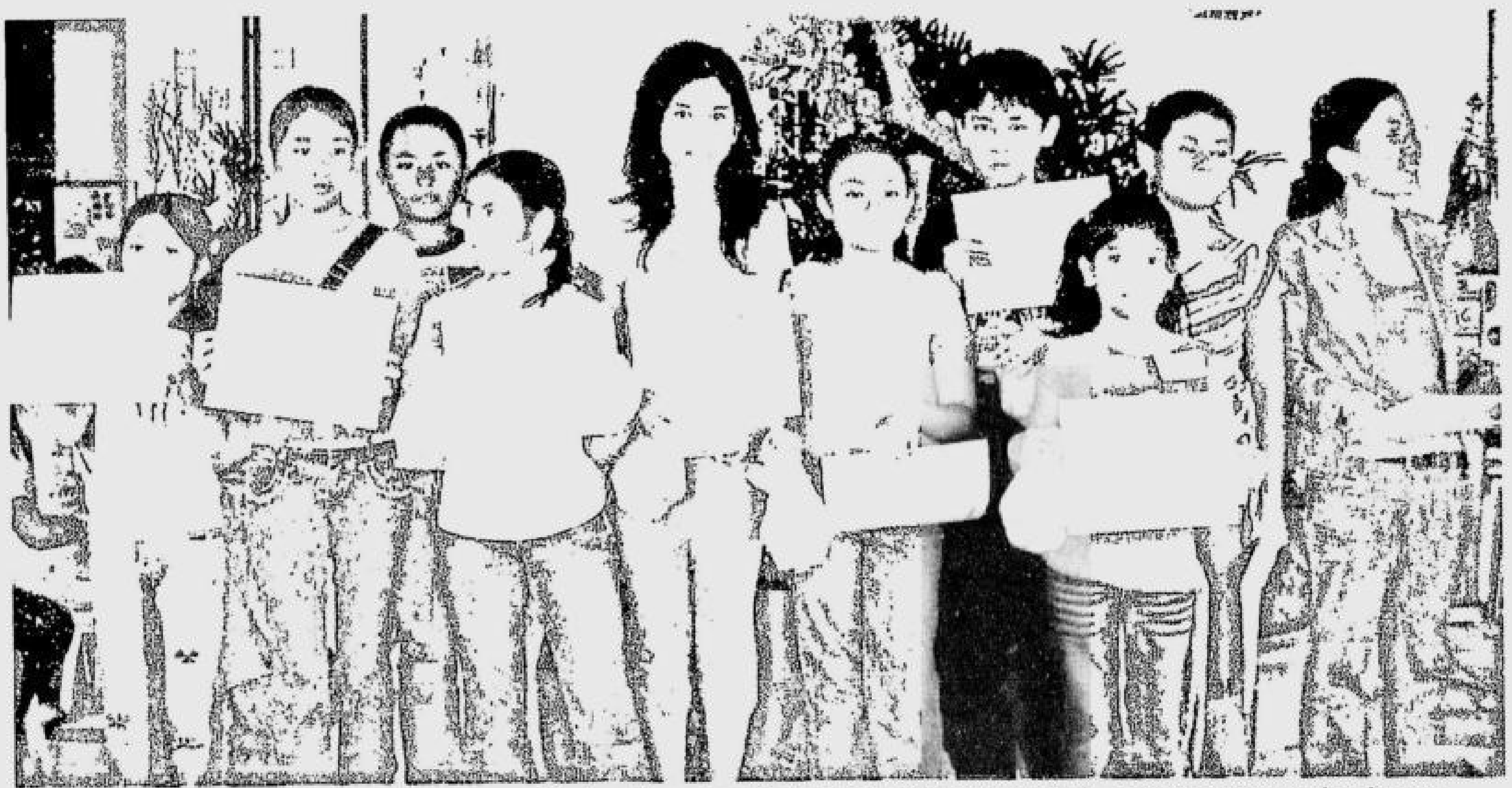
This section is dedicated to Filipinos overseas toiling on land and at sea, in factories, in construction sites and in the homes of the world, and wherever work can be contracted to secure a better life for their families. These are their stories.

FROM LAGUNA WITH LOVE

What their kids do when they party

By Estrella Dizon-Añonuevo
Contributor

WHEN I WAS WORKING IN GERMANY, ONE of my loneliest moments was during Christmastime. I missed the *parol* and Christmas lights on the windows of houses. I missed the nightly caroling of children and Christmas carols being sung on the radios and department stores.



CHILDREN of overseas Filipino workers show certificates of membership in Batang Atikha Savers Club, a program encouraging them to make the most out of the money sent by their parents, during a program in San Pablo City, Laguna.

I missed the *suman*, homemade chocolate from peanuts and *cacao*, *kalamay*, *maja* and *ube*. Most of all, I missed the noise and company of children, relatives and friends going from one house to another and receiving gifts from *ninong* and *ninang*. I was experiencing this homesickness and loneliness despite the fact that I was with my husband and child. I can just imagine how grave the loneliness of the mothers and fathers working abroad and their children and loved ones who have to spend their Chirstmas away from each other.

When we started Atikha, a non-government organization providing economic and social services to OFWs and their families in Laguna and Batangas, we always have a Christmas affair with the families of OFWs, especially the children left behind. This year, the Pamaskong Handog sa OFW at Pamilya was celebrated on Dec. 17 at the Women and OFW Center in San Pablo City, Laguna.

Savers Club

One of the highlights of the event was the Batang Atikha Savers Club (BASC) Congress with the theme, "Children's Response to the Challenge of Migration." It was attended by about 130 children from Batangas and Laguna. It was heartwarming to see a lot of children arriving very early. Those who came from Mabini Batangas have not even eaten breakfast to make sure they did not arrive late for the Congress.

The opening ceremony was impressive. The Doxology was a dance presentation entitled "Banal na Hapunan" by Batang Atikha San Diego Laguna chapter. It was followed by a mother-daughter interpretative dance number on Filipino values and tradition of BASC members, together with their mothers in matching costumes. The presentation related the value of respect for elders and praying and being together.

I was seeing these children of BASC grow before my eyes. I was surprised to see that the emcee, Chris Casubuan III, Batang Atikha junior manager of San Pablo had grown so big that he is now 5'8". Chris is an orphan whose auntie, an OFW working in Canada is supporting him. He has always been one of our youth leaders since he started with the BASC.

Value parents' sacrifice

The guest speaker of the congress was Rachel Araja, whose mother is a domestic helper working in Saudi Arabia.

Rachel, a BASC member, graduated valedictorian last year. She is now 1st year college studying Chemical Engineering at the UP Diliman. Rachel dropped by our office four days ago bringing a thank you letter to friends of Atikha who had provided financial assistance to augment the funds needed for her registration. I was in tears when I saw her grades. They were all 1's and she managed to be a university scholar for the semester. And I thank all our OFW friends abroad who are tireless in supporting deserving children in the Philippines.

Rachel's talk centered on valueing the sacrifices of their parents while working abroad. "We have to be good children and the fact that we are children growing up without our parents should not be an obstacle to our success in life," she said.

"*Ang material na bagay ay hindi mahalaga kumpara sa makapiling natin ang ating mga magulang kaya dapat pagbutihin natin para makapiling natin ang mga magulang natin sa lalong madaling panahon,*" Rachel related.

> I am seeing these children grow before my eyes. Living without one or both of their parents, they oftentimes feel depressed and deprived, but these kids are too precious to be left alone

"During Christmas, when my mother was still in the Philippines, Santa whom I secretly knew was my mother always gave me candies during Christmas time. I resented the gift because I thought I deserved more than just candies. Then she went abroad and for three Christmases I was not able to see her. I missed her so much and I realized that I should have valued my mother more when she was with us. No matter how cheap her gifts were, I should have valued them and valued her efforts in providing something for us. Material things are not important compared to being together with our parents so we have to study hard so that we can be with them the soonest possible time."

Unforgettable story

Asked what affected her most about Rachel's message, Jane Alforte, 14 years old from Batangas whose father is working in a hotel in Qatar said, "I was affected by her story and I felt the grave sacrifice of our parents which we should repay by being good and studying hard. I will never forget her story about Santa."

Oftentimes, the children of OFWs feel depressed and deprived because their family is never complete. These lead to resentment toward their parents. But Rachel's story gave them another perspective.

"I realized that we are very fortunate for having parents who sacrifice so much so that we will have a better future," said Rona Matira, a daughter of a migrant who returned from Italy and who grew up with her auntie for 8 years.

After the talk of Rachel, the children were divided into seven workshop groups and were assigned to draw their wish for their parents who are working abroad this Christmas. Most of their artwork symbolized being together as a family, including how they terribly miss their parents.

At the end of the congress, 20 children were given awards for being Modelong Batang Atikha. These are the children who are consistently saving their money weekly. Nielice Caluza is the Batang Atikha Saver of the Year, Laguna. She is a consistent saver, a youth leader and active in information and value formation actiivites. She is 12 years old, Grade 6 from San Diego Elementary School whose father has been working for 13 years as an electrician in Saudi Arabia.

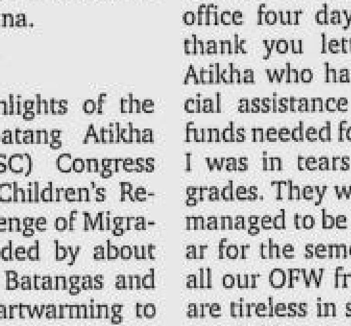
Lady Leslie Magmanlac, 12 years old from Pulong Niyogan Mabini Batangas is the Batang Atikha Saver of the Year for Batangas. Leslie is the junior manager of Mabini Batangas. Aside from saving weekly, she has attended all the training conducted by the BASC. She collects the savings of their chapter and is also a trainor of other children. She has the highest earnings from the production of accessories, boxes and flip-flops in their young entrepreneur program. Her father has just returned from Taiwan and her mother is leaving for Italy.

Batang Atikha Savers Club is an organization of about 1,000 children of OFWs and other children in the community who are aware of the need to save their hard-earned money of their parents. They are involved in activities that support other less fortunate children.

Home at last for Christmas!

By Jeric G. Contreras
Contributor

THE INQUIRER INTERVIEWED some OFWs who decided to spend their Christmas vacation here. Here's what we found out:



TADENA in Greece: I miss attending the Misa de Gallo.

Jeffrey Tadena, 27, laundry attendant on the M/V Golden Princess, returned home in November to be with his family in Nueva Ecija for the Holiday season. He felt sad last year when he celebrated his first Christmas away from his family and country.

"I waited for almost a year [on board] just to see my family and friends again. What happened was a blessing in disguise, my contract was supposed to expire later this month. Had it not happened, I would have gone home after Christmas. It would be too sad," he told the INQUIRER.

According to Jeffrey, aside from his prime reason of being with his family, he is also excited to once again fulfill his yearly practice of completing and attending the Misa de Gallo (Simbang Gabi)—a nine day predawn novena before Christmas Day.

"Every year, and it started when I was still a kid, it has become my personal devotion to attend Simbang Gabi. It gives me a different feeling and fulfillment whenever I complete the predawn masses. It's also my way of thanking and praising God for the blessings He has given [to] me," he explained.

Manolito Vinuya, 44, a bartender in LeLevant, a French cruise ship, took a break from work abroad just to celebrate Christmas with his family and friends in Bulacan.

"It's a different feeling when you're celebrating Christmas at home. It makes me fulfilled and satisfied. Seeing all my *inaanak* (godchildren) brings me happiness and joy," he said.

For Manolito, "Christmas celebration has never been better in the Philippines." According to him, Filipinos have the longest and merriest Christmas celebration.

"I have been to Europe and America, and other parts of the world. I have experienced Christmas celebrations abroad, but I could proudly say that Christmas in the Philippines is extraordinary. We celebrate it for such a long period of time, up until January. *Kahit walang pera ang ating mga kababayan, tuloy ang Pasko!*," he exclaimed.

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From Akihito, an antiwar message on 73rd birthday

EMPEROR AKIHITO REUTERS

TOKYO—THE RAVAGES OF World War II must be taught to future generations so the past is never repeated, Japanese Emperor Akihito said in comments marking his 73rd birthday Saturday.

The emperor told a press conference for local media Thursday it was also important to honor those who died in the war, according to a transcript released Saturday by the Imperial Household Agency.

Akihito said modern-day Japan was built on the sacrifices of the Japanese people during WWII, noting the hundreds of thousands who died in Hiroshima and Nagasaki following the US atomic bombings that ended the war in 1945.

"I sincerely hope that the facts about the war and the war dead will continue to be correctly conveyed to those of the generations that do not have direct knowledge of the war, so that the kind of ravages of war that we experienced in the past will never be repeated," Akihito said.

However, the emperor did not specifically mention the Yasukuni Shrine, which honors Japan's 2.5 million war dead, including convicted war criminals. Critics say the shrine glorifies Japan's militaristic past, in which it conquered and colonized much of Asia during the first half of the 20th century.

Repeated trips by former Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to the Yasukuni Shrine severely strained relations with China and South Korea in recent years.

Debates on Yasukuni were rekindled this summer following media reports that former Emperor Hirohito, Akihito's father, stopped visiting the Shinto shrine after its decision in 1978 to begin honoring convicted war criminals.

Akihito was asked at the press conference how his father felt about honoring the war dead. "I had never heard from the emperor regarding the mourning of the war dead," he replied.

Foreign media were not invited to Thursday's press conference, and the transcript was held for release until his birthday.

About 16,500 well-wishers visited the Imperial Palace on Saturday to celebrate Akihito's birthday, according to the agency. *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Talks end on N. Korea's nuclear weapons

BEIJING—Talks to end North Korea's nuclear weapons program concluded Friday without tangible progress, and Pyongyang quickly renewed threats to "improve its nuclear deterrent." American and Asian diplomats said during five days of negotiations in Beijing, the North Korean delegation had declined to discuss disarmament in formal sessions, insisting it would do so only after the United States removed financial measures that have further isolated North Korea from the international economy. China, the host for this and previous rounds of the inconclusive negotiations, said the participants in the talks—the United States, China, North Korea, South Korea, Japan and Russia—had agreed to "reconvene at the earliest opportunity." An American official involved in the negotiations said the talks could resume early next year. *NYT*

Space shuttle touches down in Florida

CAPE CANAVERAL, FLA.—Space shuttle Discovery flew through gray Florida skies and safely touched down on a Kennedy Space Center runway at twilight on Friday to cap a 13-day mission to continue construction of the International Space Station. Shuttle commander Mark Polansky gently nosed Discovery through partly cloudy skies over the spaceport before settling the 112-ton ship onto a canal-lined runway at 5:32 p.m. EST. Landing was nearly diverted to a rarely used strip in New Mexico, a prospect that would have cost millions of dollars and up to two months time to return the shuttle to Florida. Nasa bypassed its first landing opportunity at the shuttle's home port due to concerns about rain showers. The backup landing strip at Edwards Air Force Base in California was ruled out due to high winds. That left only the Northrup Strip at White Sands Space Harbor in New Mexico with favorable weather forecast for the shuttle's homecoming. Nasa hastily dispatched two cargo planes with equipment and personnel in case Discovery had to land there. *Reuters*

Court cuts Exxon Valdez damages by $2B

NEW YORK—A US appeals court cut $2 billion off the $4.5 billion in punitive damages owed by Exxon Mobil Corp. for the Exxon Valdez oil spill, saying the earlier penalty was too harsh compared with the economic harm caused by the 1989 spill off Alaska. The San Francisco-based US 9th Circuit Court of Appeals said in its ruling on Friday that it sliced the penalty almost in half in light of US Supreme Court decisions on punitive damages. The court said the company's prompt action to clean up the oil and compensate fishermen and others for economic losses lowered the reprehensibility of Exxon's conduct. *Reuters*

Forklift driver charged in UK prostitute murders

IPSWICH, ENGLAND—A MAN APPEARED IN court on Friday accused of murdering five prostitutes during an unprecedented serial killing spree in eastern England which terrified locals and gripped Britain.

Steven Wright is accused of killing Gemma Adams, Tania Nicol, Anneli Alderton, Paula Clennell and Annette Nicholls, whose naked bodies were found dumped at rural locations around the town of Ipswich in the county of Suffolk.

The bodies were discovered in the space of 11 days and the speed of the murders was said by the local police chief to be unrivalled in British criminal history.

The 48-year-old Wright, reported by British media to be a forklift truck driver, arrived at Ipswich magistrates' court in a police van flanked by two squad cars.

He appeared smartly dressed and flanked by police officers for the brief court hearing. He was remanded in custody to appear at the town's Crown Court on Jan. 2.

Paul Osler, Wright's lawyer, appealed for restraint from the media, which has scrutinized every twist and turn of the inquiry on television, online and in newspapers since the murders hit the headlines.

"The most important thing for people to remember is my client is presumed innocent until convicted in a court of law," he told BBC News, saying his client was "bearing up well."

The case evokes those of Jack the Ripper, the 19th century London prostitute killer who was never found, and Peter Sutcliffe, known as the Yorkshire Ripper, who killed 13 women, mainly prostitutes, in northern England between 1975 and 1980.

A second man, who had been questioned since Monday, was released on police bail on Thursday pending further inquiries. *Reuters*

WRIGHT AP

SANTA AND THE DALLAS BELTER

Nine-month old Victoria Branch wails while sitting for a photo with Carl Anthony, portraying Santa, Dec. 21 in a Dallas mall. AP

Security Council set to OK Iran sanctions

UNITED NATIONS—THE SECURITY Council will likely approve Saturday a slightly amended European draft resolution mandating UN nuclear-related sanctions on Iran, diplomats said late Friday.

"We have decided to meet for a vote tomorrow (Saturday) at 11 a.m. (1600 GMT)" on a new, slightly amended draft resolution put forward by European sponsors, France's UN Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sabliere told reporters after consultations of the 15-nation Security Council.

"We will take action tomorrow at 11 a.m.," Qatar's UN envoy Nasser Abdelaziz al-Nasser, who chairs the council for December, confirmed. He added the vote would follow last-minute consultations among council members.

A Western diplomat close to the talks, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the latest draft resolution would be endorsed overwhelmingly and possibly unanimously.

China's UN Ambassador Wang Guangya told reporters that he planned to consult with his government before the vote.

The vote will take place exactly two months after Britain, France and Germany first introduced a sanctions draft resolution following Iran's failure to comply with an Aug. 31 council deadline to halt its sensitive nuclear fuel work.

The European draft has been amended several times as Russia and China, which have close economic and energy ties with Tehran, deemed it too tough and likely to irk the Iranians while Washington sought a tougher text. *AFP*

Russia excuses self in final report on Beslan

MOSCOW—A RUSSIAN PARLIAMENTARY commission on Friday issued its final report on the terrorist seizure of a public school in Beslan in 2004. The report briefly highlighted law enforcement mistakes but placed blame for the hundreds of deaths on the terrorists alone.

The report's long-awaited conclusion, read aloud by the commission's chair during a session of parliament's upper house, ended more than two years of investigation into the worst terrorist act in post-Soviet Russian history.

The report suggested a hardening of the Kremlin's position on one of the most painful public episodes of President Vladimir V. Putin's administration, brushing aside lingering questions about the events and insisting that authorities, in spite of many well-documented problems, had done an adequate job.

The Kremlin had pledged that the special commission, stacked with politicians loyal to Putin and working almost entirely out of public view, would establish the facts and report the truth.

But the delivery of the report's summary in a speech did little to satisfy embittered survivors and bereaved families, some of whom labeled it a whitewash meant to shield the Kremlin from responsibility for government negligence and disregard for hostages' lives.

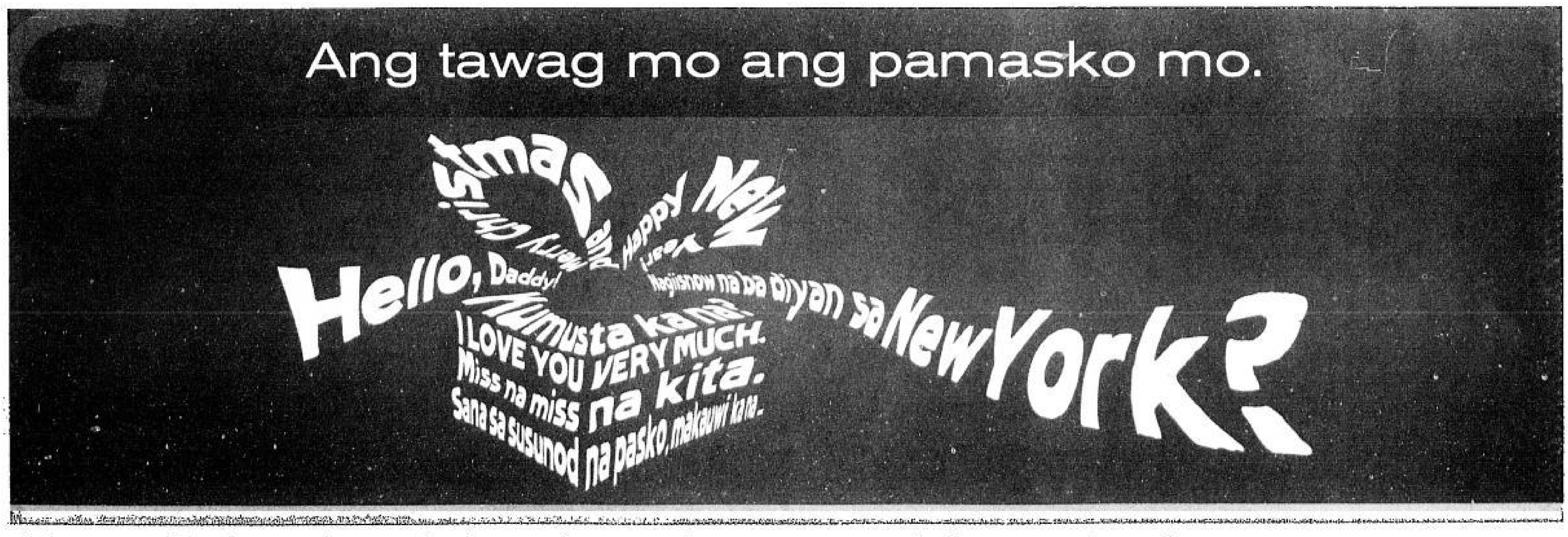
Copies of the full report were given to the Kremlin and parliamentary leaders, but not released to the public or the news media, making it nearly impossible to evaluate the evidence upon which the commission's conclusions were based.

More than 1,100 people were taken hostage at Middle School No.1 on Sept. 1, 2004, the first day of the academic year in Beslan, a town in North Ossetia, in southwestern Russia. The terrorists had been sent by Shamil Basayev, the fugitive leader of a group that sought the independence of Chechnya, a small Muslim republic in the Caucasus. The captors demanded that Russian forces withdraw from Chechen soil, where they have fought two wars against the separatists since 1994.

In his remarks to parliament, the chair of the special commission, Aleksandr P. Torshin, called some of the terrorists' requests "in-executable demands."

In the three-day siege at the school, 333 died, almost all of them after two explosions in the gymnasium, where the hostages were held, led to a chaotic battle. Another hostage, among hundreds injured and hospitalized, died later.

Torshin said the terrorists intentionally detonated bombs among the hostages, starting the last battle to the surprise of Russian negotiators and commanders. *NYT*



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MVP, Jinggoy unite for basketball

By June Navarro

A FITTING CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR A BASKETball-loving country starving for international action.

Business tycoon Manny V. Pangilinan and Sen. Jinggoy Estrada finally came to terms yesterday, opening the door for the Philippines to regain the confidence of the International Basketball Federation (Fiba) and compete in the international scene.

In a closed-door dinner meeting in Hong Kong, Estrada, president of the Basketball Association of the Philippines, shook hands with the PLDT (Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.) top honcho on a deal that could very well end the power struggle between the BAP and Pilipinas Basketball.

"We've already reached an agreement. I have to make this sacrifice to unite basketball in the country," said Estrada in a telephone interview. "Without unity we cannot move forward."

Both parties agreed to install Pangilinan as president of the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas, the organization formed after the BAP and PB signed a communiqué in Tokyo that would pave the way for the Fiba to lift its suspension on the country.

Estrada will be the chair of the fledgling group while naming PBA chair Ricky Vargas as vice chair, PLDT Global's Al Panlilio as executive director and Air21 president Lito Alvarez as treasurer.

The SBP will have to notify the Philippine Olympic Committee about the development for recognition and sent a formal communication to Fiba secretary general Patrick Baumann for the lifting of the suspension.

The only fear now is the possibility of other BAP officials blocking the settlement reached by Pangilinan and Estrada.

ESTRADA

PANGILINAN

"I have to abide by the Tokyo accord. Even if the BAP doesn't want to, I will be obliged to accede for the greater good of many," said Estrada. "I have to take this move for us to compete internationally."

Estrada stressed that the BAP will have equal representation in the SBP with four committees to be headed by BAP officials.

"As far as the BAP is concerned, we're well represented in the SBP. There are four standing committees represented by majority of the BAP members," explained Estrada, who will inform the BAP hierarchy of the development.

The BAP was dismissed as a member of the POC last year drawing the ire of the Fiba, which, in turn, barred the country from seeing action on all Fiba-sanctioned tournaments.

Since then, the Philippines failed to defend its crown in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association and the 2005 Southeast Asian Games hosted by the country while begging off from the Asian Championships, the qualifier for the world championships held earlier this year in Japan.

Next year, the SBP is hoping to field a team in the Asian championship in Saitama, Japan, in what could be the national dribblers' ticket to the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

With the development, the BAP and the PB will be dissolved as soon as the SBP gets the nod of the Fiba as agreed upon by both groups during the Fiba congress last September.

The three-man panel, which was tasked by the Fiba to create the SBP along with the formulation of the group's constitution and by-laws and appointment of officers, will also be disbanded.

The panel was composed of Pangilinan, former PB president Bernie Atienza and former BAP president Joey Lina.

Lina stepped down as BAP head and was replaced by Estrada almost two months ago that delayed the unification talks. Atienza, on the other hand, had resigned as athletic director of the College of St. Benilde and lost his representation in the NCAA and the PB.

"The BAP and PB will cease to exist because of the Tokyo accord the moment both parties agree," said Estrada, who left for Hong Kong Friday morning, had lunch with Ateneo classmate Al Panlilio and met Pangilinan at dinner to settle the issue.

"I have to admit that we went there (Hong Kong) for this issue. I have yet to read the by-laws of the SBP to know the extent of my functions as chairman," he added.

WHAT'S INSIDE

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LAKAS NG GLOBE

CJH Chairman's Cup set Dec. 28

BAGUIO CITY—AN EXCITING YEAR-ENDER tournament awaits club members as the Camp John Hay Golf Club announced on Saturday the staging of the annual Chairman's Cup from Dec. 28 to 29.

More than 250 members, guests and VIPs are participating in the 18-hole, medal play competition to test the mettle of the challenging par-72, up-and-down pine tree-lined course of John Hay, according to John Hay general manager Jeric Hechanova.

"The Chairman's Cup will be the crowning glory of Camp John Hay's wonderful year after successfully hosting numerous events like the 57th Fil-Am Golf, Asian Ladies Championship and Corporate Cup," Hechanova said.

Club chair Robert John L. Sobrepeña will see action in the tournament which has invited VIP guests, including former Philippine President Fidel V. Ramos. Tournament fee is P3,000, inclusive of giveaways consisting of four utility bags, dinner and a raffle ticket. Call the CJHGC front desk at (074)-4442561.

ALCANO: Four wins, two losses.

Alcano enters kayo stage in Super Cup

REIGNING WORLD CHAMPION RONNIE ALcano blanked Chang Jung-lin of Taiwan, 7-0, yesterday to become the first player to reach the knockout stage of the 2006 Power-In Super Cup at the Living Mall in Taipei, Taiwan.

The 34-year-old Alcano finished with a 4-2 win-loss record in Group B.

Among Alcano's victims were 2006 International Pool Tour World 8-ball runner-up Rodney Morris of the United States (7-4) and 2005 Challenge of Champion ruler Thomas Engert of Germany (7-2), Alcano yielded to former world 9-ball champion Chao Fong-pang of Taiwan (1-7) on Friday.

Yesterday, Alcano beat 2005 World Junior runner-up 17-year-old Hijikato Hayato of Japan (7-1) and bowed to 2005 WPC champion Wu Chia Ching (5-7). The devastating win over Chang sent him into the quarterfinal round which starts today.

Chang finished with a similar 4-2 record, but is waiting for the results of the matches between Wu (4-1) and Pang (2-2).

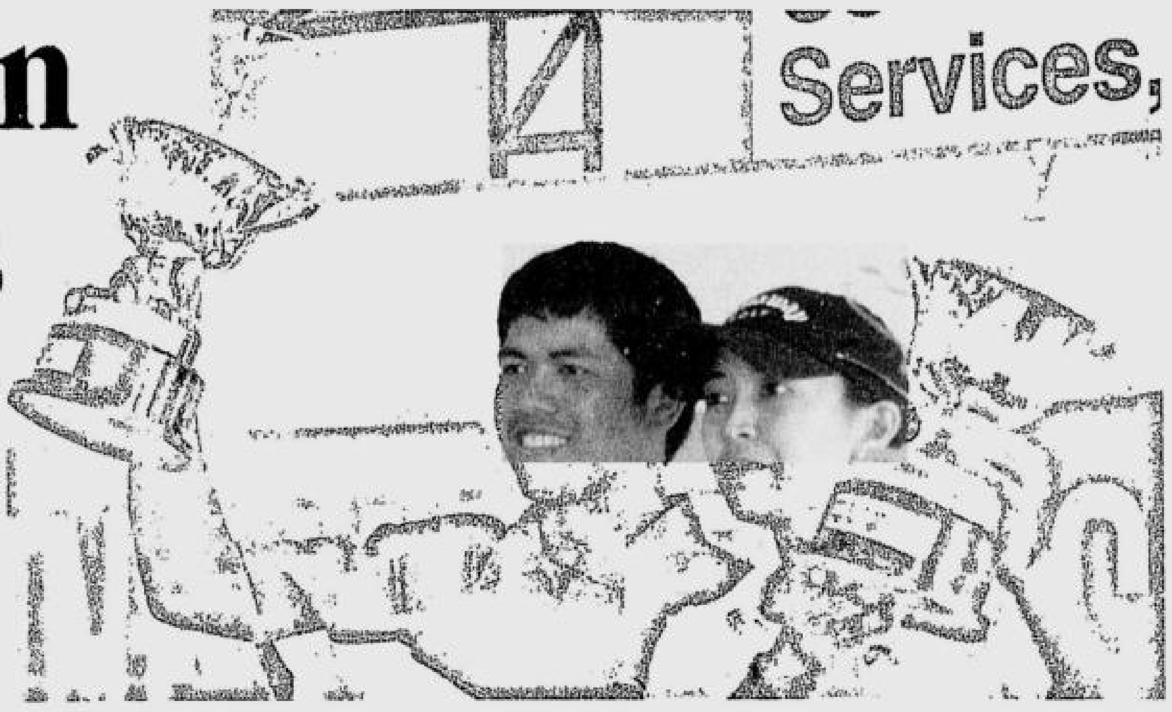
Engert and Morris are out of contention with 2-3 cards.

Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) president Ernesto "Ernie" Fajardo was very confident that Alcano will win the Super Cup event.

Alex Pagulayan, the 2004 WPC winner, and compatriot Jose "Amang" Parica were battling in Group A at presstime. Pagulayan totes a 2-3 record while Parica carries a 3-1 slate. Parica is also scheduled to play Lee Kun Fang of Taiwan in the last round.

The top four players from each group advance to the quarterfinals. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

Bayron, Villaroman post easy victories



By Musong R. Castillo

CANLUBANG, LAGUNA—IT came so easy in the final day for Jay Bayron that it hardly mirrored the fact that the 2006 Philippine Amateur Golf championship was the biggest title of his career.

The ex-caddy from Apo Golf in Davao yesterday stopped young top seed Tonlits Asistio with a 7-and-6 victory, playing almost flawlessly that he put an emphatic end to what was expected to be a shootout at The Country Club here.

And it was a far departure from all the hard matches the 27-year-old fought just to get to the finals for the first time.

Carmelette Villaroman, the veteran who has not had much success of late, completed a day of lopsided victories later after bamboozling her way past world junior champ Dottie Ardina, 5-and-4, for the women's title.

Villaroman was unforgiving against Ardina, wrapping up her separate 36-hole final to regain her place in the sport.

"Yes, this is my biggest win and it's nice to finally go all the way this time," Bayron, whose closest brush to winning this tournament came in 2004 when he lost to Boyet Saragoza in the semifinals, said in Filipino.

Bayron, regarded as the top amateur in the land after Juvic Pagunsan turned pro at the start of the year, started validating that distinction by winning the first two holes in the morning 18.

He took that same 2-hole lead in opening up the afternoon round before bloating it with birdies on the 22nd, 26th and 28th holes, the last coming after a gutsy par save on the 27th.

Bayron, whose hardest match came in the semifinals against Philippine Amateur Golf Federation of the Philippines product Mario Fernando, scored a routine par 4 on the 30th hole, which the 18-year-old Asistio bogeyed to close the match.

The 29-year-old Villaroman, meanwhile, announced her re-birth as a force, winning the other version of the national championship 13 years after she won the RP Ladies at Manila Golf.

Villaroman could have seen herself in the 13-year-old Ardina, who now represents the country in international age-group tournaments much in the same way that Carmelette did close to 20 years ago.

She's had a lot of youthful foes before getting to Ardina in the finals, first bundling out teener Paulina Sotto, 2-up, in the first round, before outlasting Asian Games teammate Anya Tanpinco, 1-up in 22 holes on Friday.

Villaroman was also sharp in downing Bambee dela Paz, 4 and 3 in the semis and took that form against Ardina who looked like she never had a chance.

Winning three of the first six holes in the morning was the jumpstart that Villaroman to claim the victory.

FIGHT AFTERMATH

GTK asks Cojuangco to fire him as POC special assistant

OFFICIALLY, THE INCIDENT WHERE top officials of the Philippine Olympic Committee nearly came to blows never happened.

Tuck away the closed files, shut the tape recorders and talk to those present during the yearend executive committee meeting of the POC, though, and you'll get the whole picture—one that includes childish name-calling, juvenile water-splashing and a request from the controversial Go Teng Kok that he be fired from his "special" post.

"We have decided not to talk about it and resolved it among ourselves," POC spokesman Joey Romasanta told the INQUIRER," POC spokesperson Joey Romasanta told the Inquirer. "It was all resolved."

The details of the incident reveal, however, a controversy beyond resolution.

The skirmish involved Go, the athletics chief, POC first vice president Rep. Monico Puentevella (weightlifting) and POC deputy secretary general Buddy Andrada (lawn tennis). They all confirmed that an incident indeed happened but didn't give details.

Nobody wanted their names revealed but several sources said table tennis president Vic Valbuena brought to the floor the issue of Go's alleged involvement in the new plot to oust him from the association.

GO TENG KOK

PUENTEVELLA

A move, according to the sources, was called to strip Go of his appointed position in the board as special assistant to POC president Peping Cojuangco. But the board decided that it should be Cojuangco, not the board, who will make such a decision.

Slighted by what happened, Go issued a heated reply which got an equally simmering response from Andrada, Puentevella and POC second vice president Manny Lopez (boxing). They cited several other circumstances where Go allegedly meddled in the affairs of other national sports associations.

Go then replied to all of them and in the process blurted out "*Para kang bakla* (You're like a sissy)" to Puentevella, who in turn stood up and rushed toward Go, revealed the source. The Bacolod congressman was prevented from reaching Go, but managed to get a glass of water and splashed it at Go's direction.

At that point, Andrada took a swing at Go from across the table but missed his mark before Lopez, Valbuena and POC deputy sec-gen Mark Joseph (aquatics) intervened.

A recess was called, said the sources, and Puentevella walked out of the meeting. He later came back for the POC Christmas Party also scheduled that evening which Go no longer attended.

When smoke cleared, Go asked Cojuangco to fire him as special assistant if "he is already a liability to him." But Go was told that resigning his post must come personally from him and that Cojuangco should not be put in a situation where he would make a decision for him.

Several NSA heads, however, felt that Go should relinquish his position "for delicadeza." One NSA president even likened him to an errant player "who should have a timeout or be substituted until he's ready to behave."

Andrada said the incident only showed that most POC executive committee members "no longer trust or fear" him.

Go maintained that he will not step down as Cojuangco's special assistant, saying that doing so would make him appear "guilty."

Joseph, who was taking the minutes of the meeting, bared that Cojuangco has been calling for a process of cleansing or "good housekeeping" inside the POC family.

"Meddling and interfering in NSA affairs is clearly identified as a threat," said Joseph. "So Peping is taking direct action and ensure compliance with the Olympic value of fair play in all aspects of sports leadership."

Forest Hills complete WGAP romp

FOREST HILLS SWEPT ITS FOUR MATCHES on the last day to upset the favorites and capture the Women's Golf Association of the Philippines (WGAP) Cup matches played in three different courses on as many weekends.

Playing the alternate shots format, the pairs of Tess Staub/Annie Que, Cathy Fong/Lilian Lu, Violy Pegels/Phine Obmaces and Nelda Roguel/Carmen Co beat their rivals to pull off the tight win for Forest Hills.

The final round sweep at The Country Club gave the Forest Hills ladies four points and a three-round total of eight, edging the fancied squads Manila Southwoods and Alabang by one and two points, respectively.

Southwoods, which topped the eight-leg WGAP Cup circuit to lead five qualifiers into the season-ending event, led the first round at the Orchard using the best-ball play with four points and remained in the front seat after the second round (aggregate) at Canlubang with five points.

But Southwoods made only two points in the third round and Alabang got four to settle for second and third places. Tagaytay Highlands placed fourth at 5.5 points and Sta. Elena a surprise fifth with 5 points.

It was the first time that a team outside Sta. Elena and Alabang won the WGAP Cup. Alabang won thrice and Sta. Elena twice in the first five stagings of the WGAP Cup.

The others who saw action for Forest Hills were Cecile Tan, Jee Cabochan, Masa Tsai, Nati Toribio, Cora Sy, Mee Hee Kwak Him and Susan Ng.

Forest Hills also foiled the bid of Alabang for permanent ownership of the WGAP Cup trophy. Winners the past two years, the Alabang ladies were gunning for a third straight win that could have won them the perpetual trophy.

MEMBERS of the Forest Hills team display their trophy.

PBA shuts door on one-sided trade deals

GAMES TOMORROW (*Araneta Coliseum*)
2:30 p.m. —Air21 vs San Miguel
5 p.m. —Barangay Ginebra vs Talk 'N Text

By Musong R. Castillo

TO PREVENT MARQUEE PLAYERS FROM being shipped to teams for a song like several recent transactions, the Office of the PBA Commissioner yesterday finally secured approval for a guideline that would curb one-sided deals from ever happening again.

Commissioner Noli Eala is expected to draw up a Restricted Trading List that will be comprised of players who can be traded only for those also in the list.

These players will be ranked based on their skills (statistical points rankings), longevity (years of playing), salaries and marketability.

"After months of deliberation, the Board of Governors has agreed to pass the proposal to create the RTL with the objective of ensuring a fair and balanced trading among teams," Eala said in a statement issued yesterday.

This guideline is an obvious offshoot of at least two lopsided trades that happened before and during the on-going Philippine Cup, when sister teams Barangay Ginebra and San Miguel beefed up their respective rosters by giving up practically nothing in return.

Billy Mamaril, Rafi Reavis and the rights to Rudy Hatfield were acquired by the Gin Kings through Air21, which acted as the conduit to the trade since Coca-Cola is a sister team of Ginebra, Purefoods and San Miguel. Sister teams are barred from, directly engaging in trades among each other.

Ginebra gave up third-string players Khalani Ferreria, Ervin Sotto, Manny Ramos and Aris Dimaunahan and future draft rights to the Express to get the trio of stars, a deal that raised many eyebrows among the other members but one which was approved by Eala just the same.

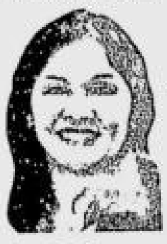
"Although it was not a perfect trade, Eala emphasized (that) it was legal," said the statement.

San Miguel, meanwhile, acquired Romel Adducul and Lordy Tugade in a three-team deal which had the Beermen giving up only reserve guard Paolo Hubalde and their first and second round picks for next year's Draft.

Aside from eliminating the perception of one-sided trades or outright cash buys-outs of players, the RTL also ensures that no team can load up on marquee players while likewise guaranteeing the marketability of all ball clubs.

Jinggoy makes basketball unification possible

IN HUDDLE



Beth Celis

BAP PRESIDENT Sen. Jinggoy Estrada was inside a taxicab in Hong Kong when he made the official announcement yesterday afternoon.

The BAP and the SBP have just reached an accord, he said, at long last unifying Philippine basketball.

It happened right there at the Crown Colony, chilly at this time of the year, last Friday, after Jinggoy was given the go-signal by the Sandiganbayan to travel "on an urgent matter."

* * *

Jinggoy arrived in Hong Kong Friday morning, had lunch with former Ateneo batchmate Al Panlilio of PLDT one-on-one at noon, then had dinner later in the day with PLDT/SBP chairman Manny V. Pangilinan, PBA chairman Ricky Vargas and Al at the Peking Kitchen.

Al was a schoolmate of the senator in elementary and high school. They are close friends, with Jinggoy often sleeping overnight at the Panlilios. They also played basketball together.

Who is the better cager?

"Al's definitely taller, but I'm the better dribbler," Jinggoy joked.

* * *

After the sumptuous Chinese lauriat and the serious talks that went with it, everybody stood and shook hands to seal the fate of Philippine basketball. For the better.

"We've agreed for MVP to be president, with me as chairman and Ricky Vargas as my vice," said Jinggoy.

Air 21's Lito Alvarez has been offered the post of treasurer and Al Panlilio, the most coveted executive directorship.

"Sana huwag namang magalit yung mga kasama ko sa BAP sa ginawa kong desisyon. I had no choice but to abide by the Tokyo communiqué."

Jinggoy said he had to make a sacrifice to unite basketball, so we can move forward, have the Fiba ban lifted, and compete internationally.

"Hindi naman para sa akin ito kundi para sa bayan at ang libu-libong mga taong nagmasmahal sa basketball. I have nothing to gain from it personally."

Jinggoy was scheduled to fly out of Hong Kong, 6 p.m. yesterday, headed for Manila.

* * *

With this development, two basketball personalities, among my long list of respondents, immediately got their Christmas wish.

One of them is Harbour Centre's Mikee Romero who asked Santa for the unification of Philippine basketball, "and for the country to have a strong representation in international competitions, perhaps even winning several titles."

The second is Ricky Vargas who also wished for unity in basketball, a successful PBA season and "a long family vacation to bond and recharge with my wife, kids and my grand daughter Julia."

Mikee's second wish is for his PBL team "to have the heart and the willingness to win a back-to-back PBL championship."

Perhaps Ricky's fourth but silent wish is also for his PBA team to win a second title, only he was a bit shy to say it.

* * *

HOOPVINE: Some people have reported sightings of former Ateneo cager Japeth Aguilar who's supposed to be enrolled in a division I USNCAA school. This went on for sometime, until one of our more veteran scribes decided to call Japeth's father Peter in the United States to check. Peter said Japeth never left the US. Ever heard of the Dopelganger? It could be Japeth's double that has been materializing here in Manila, perhaps due to an intense desire to return to the Philippines. Maybe... Like his namesake, Mon Fernandez is also an MVP at PLDT, "for Most Valuable Personnel." The PLDT version of El Presidente has been appointed alternate governor of Talk 'N Text... In line with his "Pencil ni Duncil" project, Kettle Korn's Jojo Duncil gave away 1,000 pencils and calendars to the pupils of Seundo Esguerra Elementary School in Dampol, Pulilan, Bulacan.

ASEAN UNIGAMES

Uy bags RP's third swimming gold medal

KENDRICK UY POCKETED HIS THIRD gold medal and fellow University of the Philippines (UP) swimmer Luica Dacanay added a second to her collection as the UAAP-RP squad kept its poise in the 2006 Asean University Games in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Uy won the men's 50 meters backstroke and anchored the 4x100 medley team alongside Michaelmars Danila (Ateneo), Timmy Chua (UP) and Jeffrey Laguitao (UP) to victory for his third gold medal after the 100 meters freestyle in the biennial event organized by the Asean University Sports Council.

Dacanay was also victorious in the women's 50 meters backstroke for her second gold medal after the 100 meters backstroke she contributed to the UAAP-RP team which is backed by Speedo and Hapee.

Ateneo's representative to the UAAP board Junjun Capistrano also relayed that silver medals were clinched on the third day of competitions by UP's Timmy Chua (100 breaststroke) and Ateneo's Nikki Santiago (200 breaststoke).

The team of Dacanay, Gem Ong (Ateneo), Liane Marquez (University of Santo Tomas) and Nikki Santiago (Ateneo) also settled for the bronze medal of the 4x100 medley relay on Day 4.

Thailand, however, was unstoppable with a gold-silver-bronze haul of 21-6-6. The Philippines remained in second place with 5-8-6, followed by Indonesia (1-7-5), Vietnam (1-5-11) and Singapore (0-2-0). Laos and Malaysia have no medals so far.

VINCE Carter, the high-flying swingman of the New Jersey Nets, soars to the rim as he prepares to slam home one his trademark dunks against the Los Angeles Lakers in East Rutherford, New Jersey. The Lakers, though, were to ones who scored the victory. AFP

Wizards, Sixers bury streaks

Phoenix loses, Philly wins–finally

PHOENIX, ARIZONA—GILBERT Arenas scored 54 points and the Washington Wizards beat Phoenix 144-139 in overtime here Friday, snapping the Suns' club-record 15-game National Basketball Association win streak.

It was the second-best one-game total for Arenas in his NBA career, eclipsed only by his 60-point performance against the Los Angeles Lakers five days before. Arenas also hit 30 points against Sacramento on Thursday.

Washington's Caron Butler scored 10 of his 34 points in overtime to foil the Suns, who had 42 points from Steve Nash in a losing cause.

The Wizards have made a habit of being NBA streak busters, this time ending the longest NBA win streak in six years. In 2000, it was the Wizards who snapped a 19-game victory run by the Los Angeles Lakers.

And earlier this month the Wizards snapped a 12-game Dallas win streak. Only three teams in NBA history have snapped two win streaks of at least 12 games in a single season.

Arenas, who sank 21-of-27 shots from the field, took his revenge on two of the men who dropped him from the US squad that played in Japan at the World Championships in August.

Arenas had something personal to prove to Suns coach Mike D'Antoni and club executive Jerry Colangelo, part of the USA Basketball staff that made Arenas the final player cut from the World Championship roster.

Arenas had said he wanted to repay the snub by scoring 50 points against the NBA clubs whose personnel had a role in that decision.

"I said 50. I got 50," Arenas said.

The Suns endured a difficult day simply to take the court, having been snowed in at Denver by a blizzard.

"We figured if we could just run, get them tired, they would die out from standing around so long," said Arenas, whose team surged to an early 11-point lead.

In Boston, Massachusetts, Andre Iguodala scored a career-high 31 points and added nine assists to spark Philadelphia past Boston 98-83 here Friday, snapping the 76ers' 12-game losing streak.

On the same night as the Denver Nuggets debut of Allen Iverson, the star guard traded away by the 76ers this week, the league-worst 76ers snapped their slump with their first triumph of the month.

Kevin Ollie had 14 points, eight assists and six rebounds for the 76ers, who had not lost 13 in a row since the 1996-1997 season but had not won an NBA game since Nov. 24.

The 76ers, 6-19, had lost all seven games since Iverson was benched while management tried to swing a trade deal. They had also lost 10 in a row on the road.

Boston's Paul Pierce is averaging 26.6 points, 7.4 rebounds and 4.3 assists but he was out with a left foot injury.

"I want two now," 76ers coach Maurice Cheeks said. "I thought that was just a great team effort by all of our guys. We all talked about hanging in there to win this game.

"After 12 consecutive losses, we were looking for the champagne when we went into the locker room." *AFP*

Iverson a loser in his debut with the Nuggets

DENVER—ALLEN IVERSON LIKES playing alongside his new teammates, can't believe how much snow there is in Denver after a recent blizzard and thinks he looks pretty good in a Nuggets uniform.

More than anything he's glad his first game with the Nuggets is over, even if it ended in a 101-96 loss to Sacramento on Friday night.

"I just want to come, try to help and try to contribute," said Iverson, who finished with 22 points and 10 assists in more than 39 minutes of play. "I'm a basketball player. I just get on the court and play basketball."

Iverson, acquired from Philadelphia on Tuesday, sat next to assistant coach Mike Dunlap, waiting for Denver coach George Karl to put him in, which he finally did with 3:25 left in the first quarter.

After that, Iverson never came out.

"He said he's going to play me 20 to 25 minutes," said Iverson, who shared a seat at the podium with his 9-year-old son, Deuce, after the game. "Coach knows what type of competitor I am. He just let me play."

IVERSON: Best uniform in the league. AFP

He was asked if it felt weird being in a different uniform and he grinned.

"I liked the uniform even when I was playing with the Sixers," he said. "I always said these were the best uniforms in the league. I feel like a kid in the candy store when I got to put it on. I may sound crazy, but I'm used to it already."

Even though he had jet lag and car sickness—it took him 1 hour, 45 minutes to drive roughly 20 miles (32 kilometers) from the airport due to traffic—Iverson said he was energized by the crowd.

"That's all I wanted—to be welcomed," Iverson said. "And just try to fit in the best way I can and just give the Denver Nuggets all I can give them, giving them everything I've been giving the Sixers for 10 years."

His first basket with the Nuggets was a 13-foot fadeaway with 1:24 left in the first quarter. His first glitzy pass came in the second when he threw a lob to DerMarr Johnson for a slam.

Before the contest, Rocky, the team's mascot, rode out to center court on a motorcycle, took off his Santa coat and revealed Iverson's familiar No. 3 on a Nuggets jersey.

Iverson was able to wear No. 3 thanks to Johnson, who gladly surrendered the jersey once he learned Iverson was coming to town.

"I think No. 3 looks a lot better on him," Johnson said. "He's got a legacy wearing that number. I ain't done much with it."

While the national anthem was sung, there were 15 television and still cameras all in Iverson's face.

Iverson cleared his physical shortly after arriving at the Pepsi Center about an hour before the game against the Kings. He went up to the Nuggets' practice facility to shoot some jumpers and then came out on the floor. *AP*

COMPLETE NBA RESULTS: Charlotte 101, Utah 89 Golden State 117, Orlando 108; Indiana 100, Atlanta 90; New York 103, Chicago 92; LA Lakers 99, New Jersey 95; Houston 97, San Antonio 78; New Orleans 100, Memphis 97, OT; Milwaukee 113, Minnesota 107; Philadelphia 98, Boston 83; Dallas 115, L.A. Clippers 83; Sacramento 101, Denver 96; Toronto 101, Portland 100, OT; Washington 144, Phoenix 139, OT

AF3 launches new series

JUST TWO MONTHS AFTER ITS HIGHLY successful 2006 series, the Asian Formula Three Corporation will hold a Pacific Series starting next month that will take competing drivers to China, Melbourne and Sydney.

The Pacific Series will serve as a bridge between the circuit that ended last November and the 2007 season that has been moved to the "winter months" to enable more European drivers to compete.

The first event of the regular series will be held in November 2007, with the final race set in May 2008.

Four legs make up the Pacific Series, with each leg consisting of three rounds, starting with the initial leg on Jan. 20-21 at the Zhuhai International Circuit in China. After that, the series goes to Melbourne on March 15-18, Oran Park in Sydney on April 21-22 and back to Zhuhai on June 23-24.

The Melbourne stop will see the AF3 providing a support race to the Australian F1 championship, proving the Asian-nation hopping race has finally found a niche in the world of motor sport.

"We are excited at the prospects of joining the Australian Championship events in Melbourne and Sydney and we hope it marks the beginning of a long team association," said AF3 managing director Mark Goddard.

The winner of the Pacific Series will earn a-sponsored drive to the 2007 Macau Formula Three Grand Prix. James Winslow of England, who topped the 2006 AF3 Series, finished 12th overall in this year's Macau race.

This early, various teams have expressed great interest in competing in the Pacific Series, among them JA Motorsport, Aran Motorsport, Speedtech Asia, Joson F3 and Shell Helix Kinetic F3.

SPORTSWATCH

Pacific captures PICAA title

PACIFIC SUPERTEX BESTED TOP FAVORITE KOI VILLAGE, 88-82, AND snatched the title in the 2006 PICAA Open basketball tournament at the La Consolacion College gym in Mendiola, Manila. Jeff Sanders and Welland Muñoz provided the 1-2 punch for Pacific. Sanders played his best game ever with 34 points, including five straight points that erased a 75-79 deficit, to give the Kings of coaches Estong Ballesteros and June Longalong and manager Scott Go an 80-79 lead with 2:18 remaining. But it was Muñoz, a 6-foot-2 standout from the AC-SAT Lightings, who shone in the endgame. Muñoz, who was voted tournament MVP, scored six of his 24 points in the final 1:15.

New schedule for GCAP derby

THE COCKFIGHT SERIES OF THE GENTLEMEN COCKERS ASSOCIATION OF THE Philippines (GCAP) 5-cock derby will begin on Dec. 28 at San Juan Coliseum. 3000. The new schedule was approved yesterday by the GCAP executive committee. A total of 10 derbies will be presented by GCAP for the 2006-2007 cock season. Other schedules: Jan. 10 and 31; Feb. 21; March 7 and 28; April 11, May 2, 16 and 30. Guest participants may also join all GCAP derbies for a discounted entry fee of P15,000. Regular members' entry fee is P25,000. GCAP members include Gerry Ramos, Rudy Albano, *sabong* idol Patrick Antonio, Eric dela Rosa, Jet and Joel Fernando, Jingco Brothers, Madlambayan Brothers, Rey Briones, Rep. Butch Pichay, Bubot Booc, Ricky Valencia, Tony Marfori, Mayor Buddy Dunca, Butch Nuñez, Louie Cua, Otto Balboa, Max and Bebot Roxas, Jack Yap, Vice Gov. Boyet Joson, Pol Estrellado, Totoy Haruta and Romy Castro, Pepito Ngo and Boy de Roca. Meanwhile, the SJC International 8-cock derby blasts off on Jan. 22, 24 and 26, with P6 million in guaranteed prize.

Rizal, Metro cockers clash at Cainta

BIG-TIME COCKERS OF METRO MANILA AND RIZAL CONVERGE AT CAINTA Fair Center Coliseum on Dec. 29 via the New Year Encounter 4-Cock Derby. No less than P500,000 in guaranteed prize awaits the champions, said host Sam Mendoza. The event will start at 2 p.m. The fastest win champion will bring home a brand new motorcycle. Entry fee is P11,000 while minimum bet is P5,500. For inquiries, contact 655-3334, 240-0979 or 0928-6316711 (Arnold Amores).

Yankees sign Cuban infielder for 4 years

NEW YORK—CUBAN INFIELDER Juan Miranda and the New York Yankees agreed Friday to a $2 million, four-year contract.

He played with Pinar Del Rio in Cuba from 2002-04, and the Yankees said he hit .303 there with 27 homers, 73 walks and 87 strikeouts.

"He's got some juice in his bat from the left side. We like him a lot," Yankees general manager Brian Cashman said. "He'll start in the Florida State League and we'll bring him along. We're going to respect the transition process."

Miranda, a 23-year-old former teammate of ex-Yankees pitcher Jose Contreras, grew up in Consulacion del Sur, Cuba, and lives in Santiago, Dominican Republic.

'Juan Miranda has impressed our scouts with his talent and his strength," Yankees scouting supervisor Ramon Valdivia said.

Also, Japanese pitcher Kei Igawa took a physical Friday, part of the process of completing a $20 million, five-year contract. *AP*

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WBC suspends Pacman-Barrera fight purse offer

WORLD BOXING COUNCIL PRESIDENT Jose Sulaiman has announced that the sanctioning body has suspended the purse offer set on Jan. 12 for the mandatory title defense of WBC super-featherweight champ Marco Antonio Barrera against Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao due to the Filipino icon's current legal situation.

SULAIMAN

"The WBC is currently researching this situation and will continue doing so until the clarification of the facts for the free negotiations, and will keep everybody informed after the holidays," Sulaiman said in his report to the media.

Pacquiao, who announced the other day that he is willing to give Barrera a rematch to even things up, is currently in the middle of a promotional tug-of-war between Oscar De la Hoya's Golden Boy Promotions and Bob Arum's Top Rank.

De la Hoya was the first to sign up Pacquiao to a seven-fight deal in mid-September although Arum had claimed after the Nov. 18 Pacquiao-Morales bout that his firm had come up with a deal with Pacquiao's MP Promotions to promote Pacquiao's bouts in the next four years.

Legal observers are of the opinion that Golden Boy Promotions has the edge in the race to promote Pacquiao, and Pacquiao's latest announcement of a possible Barrera fight in April has solidified GBP's claim.

Earlier this week, there have also been reports of promoter Don King pursuing Pacquiao's services, and that the wire-haired King is reportedly calling Roach on a daily basis offering big sum of money in order to get the nod of Pacquiao.

King, however, has denied these media reports in his press release, saying: "I have not called nor have I spoken with Manny Pacquiao, his trainer or anyone in his camp. I have no idea where these reports have emanated from, but I can assure everyone the media accounts are absolutely false in their entirety and have no merit whatsoever."

Meanwhile, Pacquiao is well on his way to being picked by the world's largest boxing publications and entities as boxing's "Fighter of the Year" following monumental wins over Erik Morales and Oscar Larios this year.

The race for the top honors seems to be getting pretty one-sided, as in most of Pacquiao's recent bouts, that fight scribe Michael Woods of thesweetscience.com wrote a story titled, "Is Pacquiao the Only Nominee for Fighter of 2006?" *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*

WESLEY SO: Country's brightest chess prospect.

So youngest ever RP champ at 13

Final Standings by tie break and rankings: (Top 5 in Men's division represent the country in 2007 Asian Zonal in Vietnam)

1st **7.5**—IM Wesley So (P100,000); 2nd **7.0**—IM Ronald Dableo (P50,000); 3rd **6.5**—IM Darwin Laylo (P14,857); 4th **6.5**—GM Mark Paragua (P14,857); 5th **6.5**—IM Oliver Dimakiling(P14,857); 6th **6.5**—GM Nelson Mariano II (P14,857); 7th **6.5**—NM Julius Joseph de Ramos (P14,857); 8th **6.5**—IM Yves Ranola (P14,857)

WESLEY SO ADDED ANOTHER entry to his growing list of achievements by topping the 2nd Prospero "Butch" Pichay Jr. National Open Championship and Chess Challenge at the SM City in Manila yesterday.

In the process, So, already the country's youngest Olympian and international master at 12, also became the youngest ever national champion at 13.

Handling white, So beat fellow IM Richard Bitoon in the ninth and final round, to boost his total to 7.5 points and claim the Pichay Cup and the top prize of P100,000.

At solo second place with 7.0 points is 2003 Asian Zonal 3.2a champion IM Ronald Dableo, who made a 15-move draw with top seed Grandmaster Mark Paragua in their English Opening Duel.

Dableo, an A2c officer from the Philippine Air Force under the wings of Col. Danilo Mendoza, went home with the runner-up prize worth P50,000.

The 22-year-old Paragua, who drew with So earlier, notched 6.5 points, the same output of IM Darwin Laylo, IM Oliver Dimakiling, IM Yves Ranola, NM Julius Joseph de Ramos and GM Nelson Mariano II. Each of them received P14,857.

However, after the tie break was applied, Laylo, Paragua and Dimakiling earned the right to join So and Dableo in the men's Asian Zonals set Jan. 10-19 in Vietnam.

The female qualifiers were Christy Bernales, WIM Beverly Mendoza and WNM Kimberly Jane Cunanan, who notched 5.0 points each.

GMs Eugene Torre and Rogelio Antonio Jr. witnessed the final round and were happy about So's performance.

"Exeptional *si* Wesley (So), *malayo ang mararating ng batang yan*," said the 12-time national champion Antonio, runner-up in the International Tournament in Michigan, USA, recently.

"Wesley has really gone far," said Torre. "He's really very good.

In the Challengers section, National Master Jerry Nodado, Julius Sinangote and Truman Hernaez emerged tied at the top with 7.5 points each. *NM Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

Juvenile Championship: 5-sided fight looms today

By Musong R. Castillo

CARMONA, CAVITE—A FIVE-SIDED fight looms in the richest race for two-year-olds when the P3 million, season-ending Philracom-sponsored Juvenile Championship is flagged off today at the San Lazaro Leisure Park here.

Filly Es Twenty Six and Sir Luis, a colt, are expected to be sent off as the slight picks, with couplers Macho Man and Pacman and One Man's Soul also highly regarded in the race spread over the mile.

A winner of all but one of six career starts, Es Twenty Six, a daughter of US stallion Principality out of Play it by Ear, will be handled by Efren Salvador when she guns for the P1.8 million champion's prize.

Sir Luis will be reined in by veteran Manolito F. Daquis, with the Conquistarose out of Giselle bay son coming into the race the winner of his last three starts but who will run 1,600 meters for the first time in his career.

Macho Man, after winning a leg of the Juvenile Series over Pacman, has so far had a roller-coaster campaign in the past few months, his last win coming on Oct. 1 in a regular race also over this track.

Ace Jonathan Hernandez rides Macho Man, a natural stayer who has found life hard when there's no one in the field to chase.

And that would be what Pacman will bring to this race, when the chestnut colt by Rum Tum Tiger out of Arriba Queen whom owner Hermie Esguerra named after close friend Manny Pacquiao takes the track.

Patti Dilema, who put together an impressive string of victories last week at the Santa Ana in Makati, will be Pacman's partner.

Post time is 4:30 p.m. as One Man's Soul, to be handled by Lord Santos, runs at the SLLP for the first time in his career.

Lancia Stratos (JE Apellido), Dynamic Duo (Dominador Borbe) and Defiant, whom Val Dilema pilots, round out the entries.

The racing season winds up in the last two weeks of the year, with the Santa Ana hosting the Classic Championship next weekend where the finest all-comers, led by Presidential Gold Cup winner Real Spicy, will participate.

RACING TIPS
BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Lady Thunder/Heat Wave (5), Honestly/Raikdash (4), Windsong (3), Untouchable (2)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Sir Benjo (7), Latin Music (2), Courage Heart (1), Red Phoenix (4)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Romanticist (2), Sun Coast (3), Western City (4), Golden Lass (5)
Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Euphoria (5), Erica's Talent (8), Valid Hazm (9), Storm Hall (7), Heading west/Kai Jason (1)
Race 5—Verdadera (1), Legendary (4)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Sweet Chime (6), Gold And Diamond (4), Runway Zero-Six (8), Kriza's Jewel (5), House Of Blues (9)
Race 7—(Qrt/Tri)—Sir Luis (7), Pacman/Macho Man (1), Es Twenty Six (3), One Man's Soul (6)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—All Class (12), Astimegoesby (1), Cash Mo Call (2), Reign Of Fire (13), Heart Of The Wind (4), Pulilan Beauty (7)
Race 9—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Ingay Ingay (11), Golden Harry (5), Friendly Fire (6), Chabacana (7), Ole!Ole!Ole! (9), Miss Vicky (6)
Race 10—(Qrt/Tri)—Ikaw Pag-Asa Ko (3), Firehouse (7), Ocean Dignity (1), Express Strike (5)
Race 11—(Qrt/Tri)—Batong Silyar (4), Extreme Heat (5), Luck Of The Irish (6), Crystal City (2)
Race 12—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Grand Fiesta (1), Carbon Copy (8), Bumpy Johnson (3), Mr. Lucas (7), Run Like D'Wind (5)
Race 13—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Calvin's Magic (3), Selectee (12), Mika's Pride (4), Coat Of Arms (10), Common Goal (6), Yoshiwara (5)

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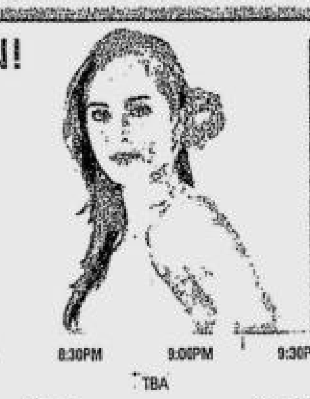

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE
Sunday, December 24, 2006

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5		Ringside		PBA										TBA		Worst Case Scenario		Araw-Araw Premyo Sa Pasko	Simbang Gabi
ABS-CBN 2	Your Song	Lovespell		The Buzz				TV Patrol World	Goin' Bulilit (6:45 PM)		Rated K (7:45 PM) E Buzz		Sharon (8:45 PM)		TBA (9:45 PM)		Santa Clause 2		
AXN		Hollywood Homicide					Charlie's Angels Full Throttle					The Amazing Race Asia		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6)		CSI: NY (Season 2)		CSI: Miami (Season 4)	
bTV		The Basketball Show	TV Shopping	NBA: Clippers @ Rockets					NBA Jam Local	EUROLeague Panathinaikos vs. Efes			NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	NBA: Clippers @ Rockets				
Cartoon Network																	The Brak Show		
Cinema One				So Happy Together				Sanggano				Kasal-Kasalan				Milan			
Cinemax			Catwoman				Fast Company (5:25 PM)			Flashback				Mean Girls				Housesitter	
CNN	Next@CNN	World News	Living Golf/Living Golf/Asian Sail/Art Of Life	World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	World News	Inside The Middle East/CNN Biz Traveller/Global Office/Global Challenges	World News	World Sport	Talk Asia	Living Golf/Revealed/MainSail/Art of Life	World News	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Late Edition Live	
Crime/Suspense		Profiler		Without A Trace		Law and Order: Special Victims Unit		CIS Chronicles: Cold Case Files		Revelations		Threshold		Without A Trace		Oz		Dominick Dunne's Power, Privilege & Justice	
Discovery Channel		How Do They Do It	Mean Machines	American Chopper		I Shouldn't Be Alive		Mythbusters		Hour Asia		Cathay Pacific Signature Series		The First Emperor: The Man Who Made China				Power Zone	
Disney Channel	Maya & Miguel	Totally Spies		Kim Possible	Lilo & Stitch	Hannah Montana	American Dragon Jr. 2	Emperor's New School	Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Mr. Bean	Wonderful World Of Disney			America's Funniest Home Video	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mortified	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Asian 9-Ball Tour San Miguel			Asian 9-Ball Tour San Miguel			Women's Golf Lexus Cup '06 Final						NFL Football Bengals @ Colts					
ETC		ET Weekend		Insider Weekend	Rated Chi 6	Beach Girls		One Tree Hill		America's Next Top Model		Friends	Simple Life 4	Project Runway		Rated Chi 6	Insider Weekend	Saturday Night Live	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Blow Out 2		Today Show - 1 Hour - Version		Dateline		Trading Spouses		NBC Nightly News	WSJR	Nanny 911		The Director		Showbiz Moms and Dads		NBC Nightly News	Hollywood One On One
Fox News		Beltway Boys	Fox News Watch	Fox Report Saturday		Heartland With John Kasich		The Line Up		The Journal Editorial Report	Beltway Boys	Fox & Friends Sunday						Fox News Live	
GMA 7	Kapuso Movie Festival				S-Files			Mahiwagang Baul		StarStruck: The Next Level		Mel & Joey		All Star K		Daddy Di Do Du		Sunday Night Box Office	
Hallmark Channel				Doc Martin		Mysterious Island				Mysterious Island				The Christmas Shoes				Midsomer Murders: Ghost of Christmas Past	
HBO	The Interpreter (2:45 PM)					Lemony Snicket's A Series Of Unfortunate Events				Surviving Christmas			The Making Of The Polar Express (8:45 PM)	The Polar Express				Man Of The House	
Hero TV	Knights Romune NG	Pretty Cure	Starship Operators	Power Rangers Ninja Storm	Mask Rider Faiz	Justirisers	Power Rangers Dino Thunder	Suzuka	Offside	Baki The Grappler	GPX Cyber Formula	G3	H3 TV Special	Weekend Marathon: Yu-Gi-Oh Weekends				PeaceMaker	Starship Operators
IBC 13		Ang Bang Hanap Mo?	Custom Rides	Philippine World Pool Championship							Mommy Academy	Pinoy Action Hits				Iyo Ang Katarungan	EL SHADDAI		
JackTV				Comedy Central	Premium Blend	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Daily Show Jon Stewart	Distraction	Banzai	American Dad	Family Guy	WWE Smackdown				South Park	Drawn Together	Crank Yankers	Dr. Katz
Lifestyle Network	Embellish This	DIY: Crafts	The Great Adventure	Your Private Island	Fine Living Special		Barefoot Contessa	Everyday Italian	Wolfgang Puck	Food Network Special		E! Entertainment Special		Five Children And It				Fashion Trance	
MTV Philippines	Ultrasound Kjwan	Summerbreak Sessions Sugarfree	MTV News	Celebrity Deathmatch	Homecoming	Score	Boiling Points	Pimp My Ride	Yo Momma	Punk'd	Trick It Out	The 2006 MTV Video Music Awards						MTV Screen	Sessions Kjwan
MYX		Pinoy MYX Countdown				Take 5	MYX Bandarito	MYX News	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Presents			MYX Hit Chart			MYX Backtrax	MYXlog
National Geographic		Mega Asia		Best Of The Week		ShowReal Asia S3		Mad Labs		Hollywood Science		Best Of The Week		ShowReal Asia S3		Nat Geo Investigates		Nat Geo Investigates	
NBN		Tinig Ng Bayan		World Pool Championship								The Games Of Your Life Primer	TM Taco Masters Challenge	The Sports List		Best And Brightest			Unlimited Diving
Net 25	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	Quadriga	The Planet	INC Chronicles (English)	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	Ang Pagbubunyag		Net 25 Weekend Report	DWTV Journal Weekend Edition	Tribe	Convergence	INC Chronicles (English)	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	Ang Tamang Daan		Net 25 Weekend Report	In Focus	DWTV Journal Weekend Edition	Euromaxx
Nickelodeon	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	Zoey 101	Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide	Asian Anime Fest: Avatar The Legend of Aang/Kappa Mikey		The X's	Danny Phantom	Trollz	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Zoey 101	Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide	Romeo	Naturally Sadie	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Ang Pagbabalik ni Pedro Penduko				Sa Kabila Ng Lahat				Eagle Squad				Out Of Control				Paradise Inn
Qtv		Lois And Clark		Elementar Gerad		Bongga Ka Star		Ang Pinaka		Pop Star Kids		May Trabaho Ka		Sunday Super Sine				Dahil Sa Iyong Paglisan	
RPN 9						World Poker Tour		WWE Experience		WWE Smackdown				Sunday's Big Event					The Working President
SBN 21				Buhay Pinoy		Shepherds Voice		New Life				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Gabay At Aksyon			
Solar Sports	AG MX Doubles Finals	AG W Doubles Finals		Motoring Today		ITZ		Gillette World Sport	Bikini Destination	Party Poker				Boxing				World Game	
Star Movies			The Sweetest Thing (3:45 PM)			Tomorrow Never Dies (5:05 PM)				AVP: Alien Vs. Predator (7:10 PM)				Star Wars: Episode II Attack Of The Clones					Nightmare Before Christmas
Star World		The Office	Two And A Half Men	NCIS		Business Week Asia	Travel Asia	Ed		Desperate Housewives		Oprah Prime Time		NCIS		Dinner Table For Three		Hollywood Shootout	Oprah Prime Time
Studio 23								Studio 23 Presents Special Edn			Y-Speak		Gag Ito!	US Girls	Desperate Housewives		Global Tour (10:45 PM)	Badminton Extreme	
UnTV				KNC Show	Ang Dating Daan			Usapang Crisand				Believer TV		Ang Dating Daan					

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Sunday BIZ
Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino
Text us your feedback: inquirer biz name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Sma

Building a jewelry enterprise to last

Five kids work to continue legacy started by parents 40 years ago

VICENTE and Milagros Dayrit

By Doris C. Dumlao

IT ALL STARTED WITH A PACKET OF LOOSE pearls an enterprising piano teacher got from her husband as "pasalubong" after a trip from Japan, out of which she fashioned fine jewelry with the help of a local goldsmith. These creations caught the fancy of her friends, who became her first customers.

Thus was how trading wiz Vicente "Ting" and Milagros Dayrit got into the jewelry business 40 years ago, giving rise to Miladay Jewels.

Encouraging her knack at creating beautiful jewelry, Ting bankrolled the fledgling business, which he named Miladay which meant Mila's Day or Araw ni Mila. The enterprise took off from the garage of the couple's home in Forbes Park, which became the first workshop.

The late Fernando Poe Jr. and his wife Susan Roces were one of the very first to order wedding bands from Mila's little workshop for their altar date in 1968. Miladay was also commissioned to provide crowns for international and local beauty pageants.

As demand for Miladay's unique pieces of jewelry grew, the couple was able to set up their first store at the Angela Arcade in Makati Commercial Center in 1969.

Ting and Mila passed away a decade ago, but their five children—Jaqueline, Michelle, Mark, Christine and Yvonne—have drawn inspiration from their parents and strength from each other to bring this enterprise to greater heights. To this day, the Dayrit children refer to Miladay's beginnings not as a story of entrepreneurial success but as a beautiful tale of love.

FROM one shop, the store now has eight outlets

Their parents' example was a tough act to follow but the second-generation Dayrits have been working hard to excel in this craft. At the recent 6th Philippine Fine Jewelry Design Competition, Miladay bagged two grand awards—in the wedding and plain gold categories, the second year in a row that the enterprise won top honors from this contest.

Miladay has also grown. It now operates eight jewelry stores, the newest of which is the branch at The Block in SM North Edsa. The others are in Makati, Alabang, Mandaluyong and Pasay.

It wasn't a walk in the park for the second-generation Dayrits to nurture the business after their parents passed away. In fact, there was a lull in Miladay's expansion a few years after being hit by a double whammy—a robbery of their store in the old Greenbelt in 1996 and losing both of their parents to cancer in 1997.

"We sat down as a family and decided to map out how to carry on the legacy that our parents left us," Miladay Jewels president Michelle Dayrit-Soliven says in an interview.

"All five of us have our own interests but at the same time those different talents and resources are able to help in the business," she says.

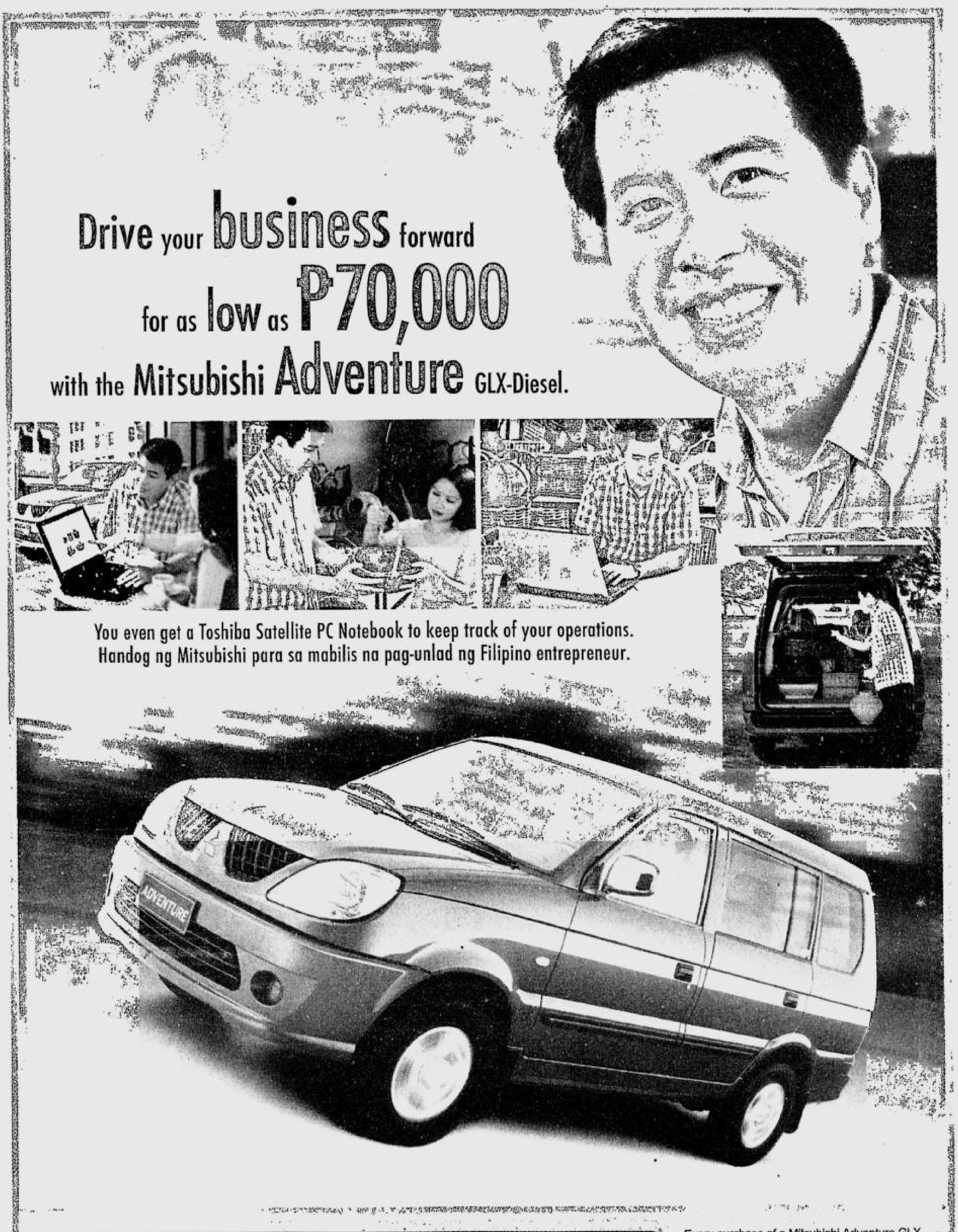
Family course

The Dayrits went through a two-year family entrepreneurship course with the help of mentor Andy Ferreria (who wrote the book "Entrepreneurs' Helpline" and was one of the pioneers of the Master in Entrepreneurship course at the Asian Institute of Management) in order to synchronize family dynamics, fine-tune the business model and map out a new strategies to grow the business.

"Right after they died, the economy also went down. It was very scary. We had a big adjustment period. We had to take time to heal our own individual pains and grievances and realized it was time to put our act together," Dayrit-Soliven says. "We finally jelled together, learned to divide the work and channel individual talents and skills," she stresses.

Christine, who chairs the country's Cinema

BUILDING/B2



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WARRANTY

Industrial estate to process its own garbage

Taps firm to recycle 813.42 tons of waste a month

By Gerry Lirio

A SCAVENGER IN Tanza, Cavite, knows that the spoiled electric wires, broken ceramics, and appliances come from the nearby First Cavite Industrial Estate. It is an easy thing to say. The garbage you throw reveals who you are.

For an industrial estate like First Cavite, host to some 90 big companies producing and trading almost everything from electric wires to appliances, from toilet papers to gloves, from plastic and paints to shell craft, from toys to fruits—the hard part, which is more telling, is how and where to throw it.

For the first time, companies inside the First Cavite Industrial Estate have decided to confront its garbage problem and make the best out of it. Two months ago, it commissioned Aeorasia, a company of biotechnologists, chemists, and microbiologists, to collect, process, recycle, and resell the estate's own trash for a two-year contract.

First Cavite is one of the country's six processing zones. It is located on a 154.5-hectare industrial subdivision in Tanza built to service all basic needs of any manufacturing concern of the light to medium scale industry. Among its locators are DutchBoy paints, Cambridge Electronics, Universal Robina, Sanwa, Shell Arts, Sca Hygiene, Kolin Philippines, all of them dispose different kinds of trash in huge volume each day.

The combined volume is about 813.42 tons a month, broken down as follows: 73.59 tons, garbage; paint sludge, 3.48 tons; wastewater sludge, 652.91 tons; quartz tube, 0.5 tons; garden wastes (biodegradable) 5.09 tons; other wastes, 32.85 tons; sand, 5 tons; glass mat, 40 tons.

Shell Craft accounts for the biggest volume at 17.15 tons while Koki Philippines is among the smallest at 0.02 tons, both each month.

Aeroasia started operation at the beginning of the new millennium geared by young professionals with extensive experience in system designing and fabrication of water purification equipment intended for medical wastes.

Aeroasia will be the First Estate's second garbage collector. The first collector couldn't service everyone. From those it can, wastes go directly to the Tanza dump, around 20 kilometers away from the estate.

In their contract signed by First Estate's Melencio Balilo and Aeorasia's Norlan Unson and Sonny Jimenez, the two companies agreed that Aeroasia wouldn't just be a collector, but a garbage processor.

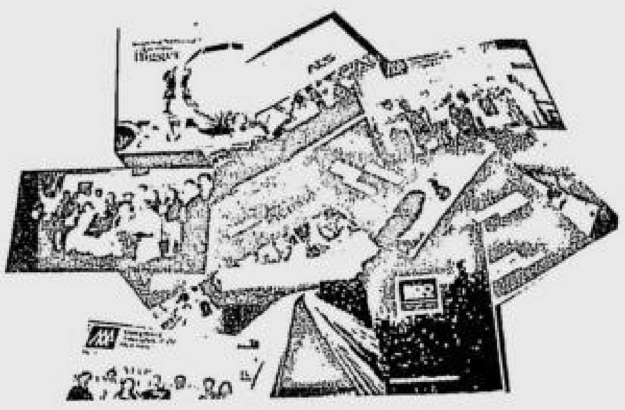
Aeroasia wouldn't use the Tanza dump when its starts operation early next year. It would instead recycle wastes in a 2,500-square-meter area inside the estate.

With the help of a group of Chinese investors led by Roman Fornelosa, Unson will put in P20 million for the development of the site, effectively making Aeroasia one of the estate's locators.

For a start, Aeorasia can reprocess 150 tons of construction wastes a month and, out of it, build about five classrooms for scavengers in Tanza, among others.

Now, if only the other export processing zones will follow suit.

OFFICIALS of First Cavite and Aeroasia look over the site where the recycling of the garbage will be done.



MAP picks best annual report

MACROASIA CORP. WON THE Best Annual Report Award for 2005 handed out annually by the Management Association Philippines.

First runner-up was Aboitiz Transport System Corp. while second runner-up was the Manila Water Co.

"MAP believes that the capital markets will develop quickly if information about companies flows freely to interested parties. Minority shareholders, with little participation in company management, learn about management decisions and governance through the annual reports," outgoing MAP president Evelyn R. Singson told the 15 semi-finalists

The Best Visual Presentation Award was given to Aboitiz Equity Ventures and PLDT. PLDT also got the Best Corporate Governance Disclosure for Non-Financial Institutions Award while the Best in Corporate Governance Disclosure for Financial Institutions went to Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

The MAP gave a special award for a conglomerate whose three or more companies made it to the top 15 finalists and this was awarded to Ayala Group.

MAP, the leading management organization in the country, annually holds this search to award corporations, which practice good governance by adhering to the rules of transparency, accountability, and are compliant with international standards of financial reporting.

Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) president Francis Lim said that many listed companies will be interested to vie for these prestigious awards in the coming years.

The 15 finalists were Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Aboitiz Transport System Corp., Ayala Land, Banco de Oro Universal Bank, China Banking Corp., Chinatrust (Phils.) Commercial Bank Corp., First Gen Corp., Globe Telecoms, Keppel Philippines Marine, Keppel Philippines Properties, Macroasia Corp., Manila Water Co., Petron, PLDT and PSBank.

Program helps strengthen entrepreneurship

MORE THAN 400,000 FILipinos graduate from college every year, and among this lot, only 50 to 60 percent get jobs.

The solution to this problem will not occur anytime soon, judging from the little effort that is being done to address it,

So where do our new graduates go?

Overseas. Some are forced to do manual labor and most end up not using their college degree at all.

To put it simply, the effort, time and money new graduates have spent for their education go down to, well, almost nothing.

Jobs are getting harder to come by. Blaming this on the economy, the government, or the quality of education will produce nothing.

Mindset change

"There has to be a change of mindset among Filipinos. Instead of waiting for good opportunities, we should take the initiative and create these opportunities ourselves," says Jose Navarro, director of the Entrepreneurial Management Program of the University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P).

"After all, we all dream to be a CEO or president someday. But how do we get there? By getting employed? That's a very long way to go. We should build our own business. Let's not be intimidated by the prospect because entrepreneurship can be learned," he added.

Unique program

The University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P), which has seen the need to train the country's future entrepreneurs, has designed a unique program that spells success for its graduates and empowers them to bridge the country's entrepreneurial gap as well.

The University's Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurial Management (EM) Program is the first of its kind in Asia. It is the only program that captures and nurtures entrepreneurial talent as early as the adolescent years. For 17 years now, it has been producing industry movers and shakers—leaders who, in one way or another, have helped the country's economy and created jobs for thousands of Filipinos.

The four-year program requires students to work during the three summers in between academic years.

Here students are exposed to the corporate setting early on, making it easier for them to adjust to responsibilities and challenges that will face them after graduation.

Aside from their on-the-job training, students also attend late afternoon to evening classes.

"The Entrepreneurial Management Program is a race to maturity. We want students to realize that college should not be treated as an extension of high school. We pressure and challenge our students simultaneously, to develop in them the resilience, patience, diligence and motivation that every professional, not only entrepreneurs, should have. And having learned a lot from their experience, in the end, our students understand and become very grateful to us for subjecting them to a difficult course," Navarro said.

New ventures

The program is unique for its New Business Ventures (NBV) Series, wherein students are challenged to put up their own successful business even before they graduate from college.

Without a viable business at the end of the series, students will not be allowed to graduate. "The NBV Series puts students to the test—whether they have acquired the knowledge, skills and talents of an entrepreneur," Navarro explained.

The NBV Series confronts students with various issues in the entrepreneurial process: creating and identifying opportunities; marshalling the resources required to exploit an opportunity; taking risks and action; reaping, sustaining and renewing growth and rewards and re-conceiving a mature business.

Given the difficulty of the course, students applying for the program undergo a meticulous selection process involving exams and interviews.

"Out of the 600 who would apply for the program, only 10 percent would be admitted. The reason is that we make sure that we select students gifted with the values of an entrepreneur: creative, risk-taking and opportunistic, or quick to spot opportunities even in adverse situations," Navarro said.

Success story

Among the program's graduates is Jose Antonio Soler. Soler, the program's first cum laude alumnus, is the president of Solerex Water Technologies Inc. He bought this business from his father shortly after he graduated, and he has continuously grown the company since then. Now, Solerex has 300 franchises.

Only 33 years old and already a successful businessman, Soler is concurrently teaching in the EM Program to share his gift with young aspiring entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurship is a potent economic engine. It creates opportunities for individuals and helps propel the Philippine economy. After all, Filipinos are resourceful by nature. Even in depressed areas we can find Filipino ingenuity, such as using clotheslines to deliver goods from a *sari-sari* store to neighboring houses in a flood-inundated barangay. UA&P is urging Filipinos to brave economic challenges by putting up businesses of their own. It is true that taking risk is part of venturing on a business, and we should not be afraid to take the risk and plunge.

"You learn best when you commit mistakes because you become wiser," Navarro said.

Building a jewelry enterprise to last

From page B1

Evaluation Board, is in charge of marketing and corporate communications.

Mark, who is into other businesses (like Gold's Gym), helps with the workshops, in finding locations, in retailing activities and other special projects.

"He has many, many good ideas and whenever he reads something, he brings forth those ideas and translates them into something helpful to the business," she says.

Jaqui (Dayrit-Boncan), a CPA, handles all real estate interests while Yvonne (Dayrit-Romualdez), who's good with administration and financial matters, is in charge of affiliate Miladay Pawnshop.

Most obedient

Of the siblings, Dayrit-Soliven would naturally be on top of the business because she had spent most of her life learning the ropes of this business from their mother.

"When mom was alive, I followed everything she wanted me to do—hangout with her friends, take up classical singing, wear Maria Claras. I was the most obedient one. I lived with her even after I was married," she says.

She doesn't like handling money but is creative and meticulous and is good at creating new lines.

The jewelry business, she says, requires a lot of personal touch. And usually, customers come back, transcending generations.

"We give jewelry advice, such as when dividing the family heirloom; what to sell, what to keep, how to redesign or revalue whether for insurance purposes," she says.

"We also have the turn-your-litter-into-glitter (program). The items sitting in your jewelry box, you can bring them over and redesign them into something that suits your personality," she says.

The biggest lesson from that entrepreneurship course at AIM was thus to keep the family together in order to keep the business.

"It's your family you can really depend on in times of need ... so we instill family values even among our employees," she says. "The family that works together shines together. Togetherness is the secret of success."

Overhauled paradigm

The business paradigm had to be overhauled to position the company to bigger markets, using existing liquidity. After all, their mother Mila dreamt that "each Filipino shall own a Miladay no matter how small."

"Then we realized that some people believe that Miladay is unaffordable, that we cater only to the elite market," Dayrit-Soliven says.

But in fact she says Miladay has items worth as low as P1,000. The store has also come up with gift cards worth at least P3,000, giving recipients the freedom of choice.

"We also decided to come up with a new look for our stores. It's still Miladay (of old) but with more modern approach, still with nostalgia, to attract the younger group ... We rekindled old relationship while building new ones," she says.

Miladay also started branching out into the malls, realizing the opportunities from the human traffic. The stores are not too big, ranging from 30-40 square meters, but enough to make a strong presence. In some malls like Alabang where there's no bigger space available yet, they make do with kiosks, which has turned out to be a good approach.

The jewelry store chain, which attracts a lot of *balikbayans* and foreigners, has also established an online presence www.miladayjewels.com.

"The jewelry business is more competitive now. There are so many foreign brands; all the fashion homes are going into jewelry. People have more choices but we're comfortable with who we are and the work that we do and the value-for-money items that we prepare in our stores," Dayrit-Soliven says.

Siblings' collection

Reflecting their personal touch in the business, each of the five siblings has a jewelry line collection patterned after their individual personality. Jaqueline started the heirloom estate collection of Miladay through her Jaqui O's line of investments that can be worn and passed on from generation to generation. Michelle Marie, named after Dayrit-Soliven, is a collection of hip and happy jewels that can be worn day in or day out. Mark of Miladay is a showcase of distinctive male contemporary jewelry. Rendezvous Tavel Collection is a line of colorful jewelry inspired by Christine's many sojourns. Yvonne developed Keepsakes of Gold, a tangible showcase of real family treasures.

"As a family, we have already built our name and all we had to do was repackage it and relaunch it because it was a legacy that our parents brought us. And it's a business we believe we can pass on to our children," she says.

THE DAYRIT children

Seaweed processing faces bright prospects

Unusual growth posted with closure of plant in Denmark

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—THE COUNTRY'S seaweed processing industry faces bright market prospects with the closure of a plant in Denmark.

Seaweed Industry Association of the Philippines (Siap) president Benson U. Dakay, called "seaweed king" in the past, says the industry has experienced unusual growth this year as the export sales increased beyond 10 percent.

But Dakay expresses concern over the continued strengthening of the peso as it could hamper the growth of the processed seaweed or carrageenan industry, as well as the other export sectors.

Dakay says the industry export sales has been growing at an average 10 percent over the past few years.

The Shemberg group, for example, registered 25 percent growth in export sales this year, according to Dakay, who is president and chief executive officer of the Shemberg Marketing Corp.

Dakay says that the other seaweed processors also posted more than the usual growth this year due to the closure of the FMC Corp. plant in Denmark, which had a 5,000-ton capacity.

He says the seaweed processors in the Philippines filled the void left by the closed Denmark facility.

Dakay notes that the inclusion of three seaweed processors in the Customs Port of Cebu's top 10 exporters would show that these companies have generated increased sales.

In the past, Dakay says, the furniture companies usually get the top spots.

This year, however, the Shemberg Marketing Corp. ranks number one, while seaweed processors FMC Marine Colloid Philippines Inc. and CP Kelco Philippines Inc. were ranked third and fifth, respectively.

Three furniture companies—Pacific Traders Manufacturing Corp., Mehitabel Furniture Co. Inc. and Casa Cebuana Inc.—ranked sixth, eighth and tenth, respectively.

On the other hand, Dakay warns the export sector would lose its competitiveness in the world market if the peso continues to strengthen.

A FARMER carries a bunch of newly harvested seaweed.

This would not bode well for the economy, he says, since the export sector provides employment, both direct and indirect.

He cites as an example the seaweed processors, which has helped create livelihood opportunities in southern Philippines and other areas in Luzon and the Visayas.

"We have created 10 hacienderos/seaweed farmers in Southern Philippines," Dakay points out.

In earlier interviews, he also maintained that the seaweed industry has helped address the problems in the Muslim areas since the bulk of seaweed supply comes from these areas.

Aside from the processed seaweed or carrageenan industry, the other export sectors are also affected by the strengthening of the peso.

If the peso remains volatile and the government refuses to intervene, he says, the export sector would have to look internally to see how they could cut down costs to sustain growth.

If the situation worsens, Shemberg would have to stop buying local seaweed and source its raw material requirement from Indonesia, which is cheaper and of better quality, Dakay says.

The local seaweed sells at $800 per ton at 42 percent moisture content while the Indonesia seaweed costs only $600 per ton at 35 percent moisture.

Dakay says the Indonesia seaweed is cheaper and has better quality but Shemberg continues to buy locally to help the local farmers.

At present, Shemberg source 50 percent of its raw material requirement from the Philippines and the rest from Indonesia.

In the past, Shemberg sourced almost 100 percent of its requirement from local seaweed farmers but the company had to buy from abroad to remain competitive.

On top of the strong peso, Dakay says, the country's seaweed processors have to contend with the growing competition from other Asian countries.

"There are too many players in the semi-refined carrageenan market," he says.

There are 500 new seaweed processors in China, 22 in Indonesia and 10 more in the Philippines, Dakay adds.

Get job alerts via your mobile phone

LOOKING FOR A JOB AND LANDING one is now made easier with PeopleWorks, a mobile-based job placement system exclusive to subscribers of Smart Communications, Inc. (Smart).

One-time registration in the mobile service assures the Smart subscriber of receiving free SMS up to three times a week alerting him of available jobs in the industry of his choice.

"Smart is continuously looking for services that will enhance processes and make things easier for our subscribers. In this case, the subscriber doesn't have to scan the classifieds or surf the Internet to know what's on the job market. Through PeopleWorks, he receives job alerts on his phone, wherever and whenever he is three times a week for free," said Lawrence Ferrer, Smart Value-Added Services head.

Participating companies and PeopleWorks partners are Siemens Inc.; Great Pacific Life Insurance; The Thompson (Phils.) Corporation; Warner Music Phils.; Equicom Systems Management; NGL Consulting Services Limited; ABS-CBN Interactive; Level-Up, Watson Wyatt Asia Pacific Shared Services Center; Sara Lee Phils.; Philippine Savings Bank, Jardine Technical Services Inc. and MISYS International Banking Systems

To avail of the service, the subscriber must first register by sending the following information to 2987: PW (NAME)/(AGE)/(gender: M or F)/ (City of residence) /educ:HS/VOC/COLL/PGRAD) /(SCHOOL).

For example, a subscriber by the name of Ted Cruz wants to subscribe to PeopleWorks so he sends to 2987 his information: PW Ted Cruz/24/M/Mandaluyong/COLL/St. Mary University. Each SMS costs P2.50.

Once successfully registered, Mr. Cruz will be prompted to choose in which industry he wants to work: FIN (finance), HR (human resources),

ADMIN (administrative), SALES, MKTG (marketing), ARTS, MEDIA, SERVICES, HOTEL, FOOD, TRAVEL, EDU (education), CS (customer service) IT (information technology), ENGG (engineering), MFG (manufacturing), SCI (science) and HEALTH. If Mr. Cruz wants to look for a job in the IT industry, all he has to do is text PW IT ON to 2987. This SMS is free of charge.

The fictitious Mr. Cruz will then be notified via SMS that he will now receive free alerts to job openings in the IT industry up to three times a week.

Should Mr. Cruz decide that he also wants to be alerted to job openings in the customer service industry, he can text PW CS ON to 2987, for which he will now be charged P2.50 per SMS.

Three times each week, Mr. Cruz will start receiving free job alerts, which are lists of codes with corresponding job descriptions. If he wants to apply for one of the jobs, he simply sends PW (job code) to 2987.

For example, if Mr. Cruz wants to apply for job code 000165, which represents a systems analyst, he simply texts PW 000165 to 2987. Each SMS costs P2.50. He will then receive an SMS confirmation of his application as well as an advice that all applications will be processed within two weeks.

Only when he qualifies for the job will Mr. Cruz receive an SMS asking him to send his resume to jobs@peopleworks.com.

Even if he doesn't qualify for the post, Mr. Cruz will still receive an SMS advising him that the position has been filled.

The Smart mobile-based job search and placement program was developed by content provider Wireless Services Asia (WSA) in partnership with Asia Select and Ward Howell.

Smart is the leading wireless services provider in the country, serving a total of 22.9 million subscribers as of end September 2006.

Tarlac exporter sells …

From page B4

The stones that Mt. Pinatubo spewed out in vast quantities in Central Luzon sold well in the market.

However, when Magcalas and her husband separated in 2000, she was left to run the business, which now employs more than 25 workers.

She supervises the workers every step of the way—from drilling and slicing of the stones to putting together the different components and packaging these in gift boxes.

She also continues to attend local and international exhibits and personally oversees the shipment of her products.

"*Masipag ako* (I work hard). I give my time and devotion," she says.

But an entrepreneur must be "efficient and resourceful" at the same time, she adds.

Articulate and cheerful, this food and nutrition graduate of the University of Santo Tomas has every reason to be optimistic about expanding her foreign market.

Recently she exhibited her stone products in a trade show in Hong Kong. Her next stop is Dubai.

"I will only stop doing trade shows when I already have two more foreign markets the size of the one I have in France," she says.

Her only regret is that the Philippine market has been left behind.

"Sorry about this, *pero hindi ko naman ini*-snub *ang* local market (it's not as if I'm ignoring the local market for my products)," Magcalas says. "I can sell locally. In fact, I have a buyer in Manila."

To describe how much Oricon stone products are so admired abroad, she tells about a buyer who gushed: "Oh, my God! Imagine what you can make out of stones."

ORICON has exhibited its stone products in Hong Kong.

Buy a ham, get chance to win a house

WHAT IS YOUR MOST FERVENT Christmas wish?

For many, it will be their own home. For some, it may be a trip abroad. Still, a greater number wish for something as simple as a special Noche Buena dinner with the family.

Purefoods-Hormel Company, makers of Purefoods Fiesta Ham, is endeavoring to make the Holidays more special for more Filipinos this year, via a promo that will give them the chance to realize their Christmas wishes.

Dubbed Purefoods Fiesta Ham Noche Pa-Buenas, the promo will give away a brand new house and lot in Maravilla, one of the more notable residential developments in the thriving industrial city of General Trias, Cavite as grand prize. Also at stake are all-expenses-paid trips to Hong Kong for three families and free Noche Buena packages for 50 families every week.

According to Isabel Pineda, Purefoods hams brand manager, customers can join by buying any Purefoods ham, including Purefoods Fiesta Ham, Purefoods Chinese Ham, Purefoods Chicken Ham, Purefoods Pear-Shaped Ham, Purefoods Jamon de Bola and Purefoods Brick Ham.

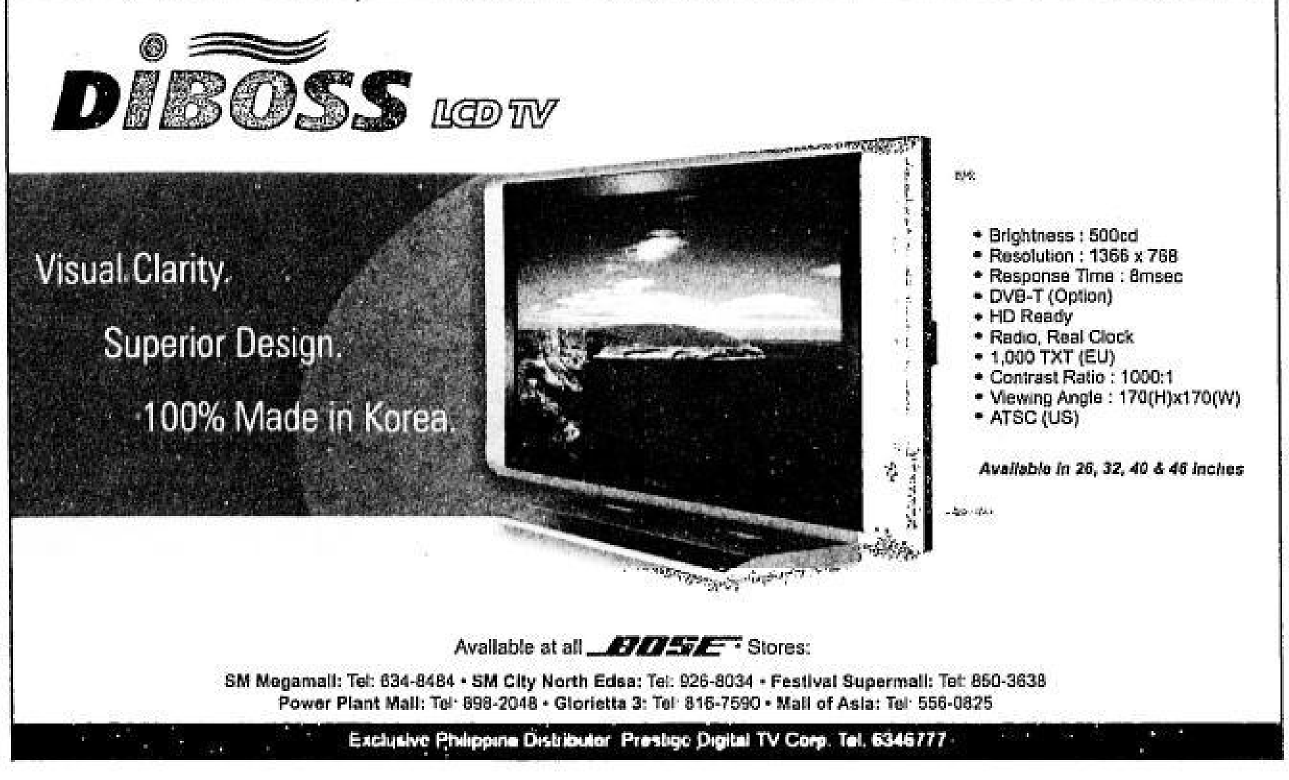
Customers only need to send, via text or SMS, the special number code found in the hams' packaging, to 2366.

For example: Text <PFHAM> <6-digit code> <date or purchase (MM/DD/YY)> to 2366.

Since the promo is also PHC's way of celebrating the 50th anniversary of its flagship Purefoods brand, the promo has a corporate social responsibility (CSR) component that aims to give everyday consumers the chance to make a difference in the lives of many.

Customers who send the most text entries but are not drawn in the weekly and grand draws will get the chance to throw a Christmas party, courtesy of Purefoods Hams, for a charitable institution of their choice.

"We see this promo as an extension of our corporate social responsibility initiatives. We believe that through a promo like this, we will be able to help make more consumers socially aware and instill in them the spirit of volunteerism," Pineda said.



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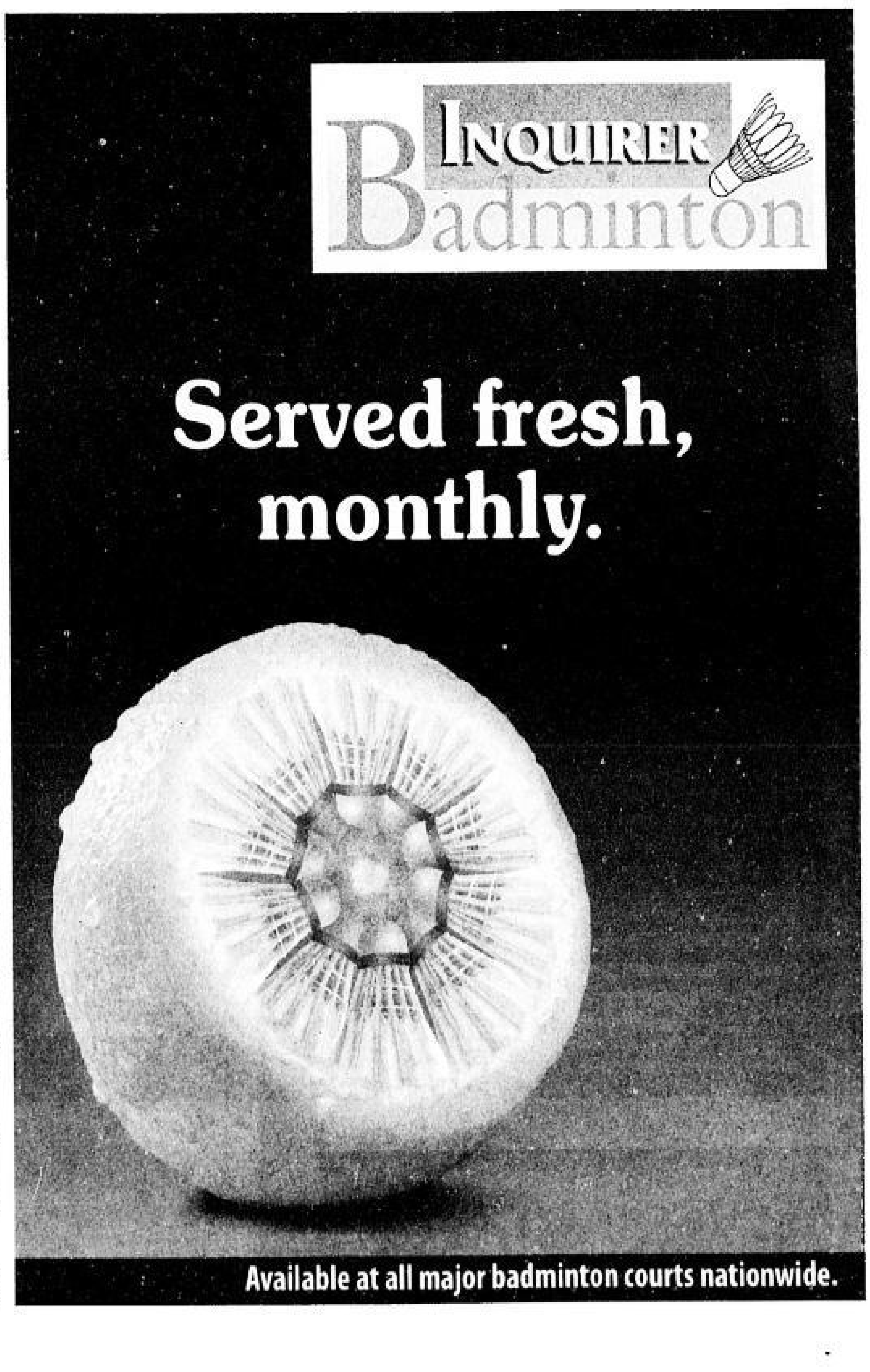

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Beaming Ilocos to the world via its cuisine

Balikbayan aims to glamorize and market Ilocos Sur and Filipino cuisine

By Cristina Arzadon
Inquirer Northern Luzon

VIGAN CITY—A desire to lift the Filipinos' image abroad has brought *balikbayan* Roschellie Agatep Corr back to her hometown Vigan and explored what could be the best instrument to promote her Ilocano ancestry.

And since Filipinos love to eat, Corr found a vehicle to beam Ilocos to the world through a two-day culinary feast, Mangan Tayon! (Lets Eat!), on Dec. 8 and 9.

It took only a month for Corr to organize the event, which included gathering more than 30 producers of popular Ilocos Sur cuisine like *bagnet* (pork chunk), *longganisa* (native pork sausage), *pinakbet* (sauteed vegetables) and *empanada* (made of grated papaya or mongo and wrapped in crispy rice mixture) and delicacies like *kalamay* (sugar-based glutinous rice), *bibingka* (rice cake), *tinubong* (rice cake stuffed in bamboo tubes) and *salapusop* (steamed glutinous rice).

The idea to promote Ilocos cuisine stemmed from Corr's observation that Filipino food was not making raves abroad as its other Asian counterparts.

An avid traveler, Corr said the Filipino cuisine is a disenfranchised entity compared to Vietnamese, Tahi, Malaysian, Indonesian and Japanese food.

"There are no immediate Filipino restaurants that I have seen and I jump for joy when I do find one, though rare and usually located off the beaten track," she said.

"My interest lies in exposing (Ilocos) for all its natural beauty. I thought that since Filipinos love to eat, the Ilocos Sur cuisine is a unique and interesting product that needs to be marketed appropriately," Corr said.

"Nobody has really held a festival ... there's been food festival and food fair, but there has been no festival which featured collectively all the specialties and delicacies of Ilocos Sur," she added.

She plans to market the culinary event abroad particularly to Ilocano communities in Hawaii.

"The main agenda is to endorse, glamorize and market not only Ilocos Sur cuisine but the Filipino cuisine as a whole, internationally," she said.

Corr found home in the Caribean Island of the Turks and Caicos and the United States since she left Vigan in 1974. She returned to the Philippines in 2000 taking over her family's real estate business and expanding it to media production and food industry.

"I don't want to be looked at as a balikbayan (who is just here for anything else) I'm about helping and wanting to do what is good for us Filipinos. It made sense that I could use the uniqueness of Ilocos cuisine," she said.

"If I can do that as a balikbayan and bring it to my friends and families and tell them to come to the country which is a beautiful country with beautiful food. But I need support."

The culinary festival gathered the country's popular chefs led by Tristan Encarnacion, resident chef of GMA 7's morning show Unang Hirit and Baguio's John Carlo Lachica, Aldrin Amat and Wilmur Kinomes.

The four reinvented Ilocos' popular products like bagnet and longganisa to come out with mouth-watering specialties like bagnet-*padas* pizza (padas is a small fish variety which is usually turned to *bagoong* paste) and longganisa tacos.

Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson bacame an instant chef when Encarnacion helped him concoct the teriyake bagnet dish made of longganisa, *ukoy* and empanada wrapper although his favorite dish is supposedly the "puqui-puqui," roasted eggplant mixed with tomato, onions and bagoong sauce.

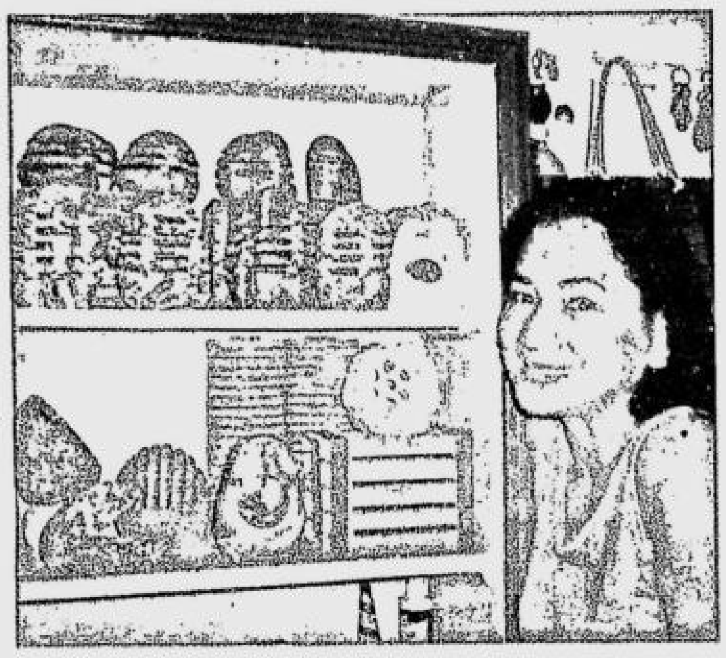
Singson said the food festival was another venue to reintroduce Ilocos' popular food delicacies to the tourist city of Vigan.

Corr said the culinary festival will act as a culinary springboard to boost the image of the Pinoy cuisine and to universally carve a respectable niche in the culinary market.

"I want to promote Filipino cuisine and I am taking off with what we have in the Ilocos," she said.

SOL Foodcourt
MANGAN TAYON!

PARTICIPANTS take time out to pose for photograph in the Mangan tayon! Food fest.
PHOTO BY ROSCHELLIE AGATEP CORR



GISELLE Magcalas with some of her products
PHOTOS BY RUSSELL ARADOR

Tarlac exporter sells stones

By Russell Arador
Inquirer Central Luzon

CONCEPCION, TARLAC—Entrepreneur Giselle Magcalas built her 16-year-old multimillion-peso export company stone by stone. Literally.

From a rough-hewn piece of rock, which Magcalas and her former Swedish husband used in 1990 as a sample material, her company, Oricon Corp., now boasts of more than a dozen products—candleholders, vases, oil diffusers, ashtrays, key and book holders, among others—that are made entirely of natural stones.

Magcalas, 47, says her firm is the only one in the country that manufactures and exports these kinds of items.

Her products, as described in the company's website, "are decorative items where the natural shape, texture and color given by the forces of nature are preserved as much as possible."

"Each stone is chosen for its beauty and uniqueness in shape, structure and color. No two stones are exactly similar," the website adds.

She ships to France at least 5,000 pieces of her stone products every two months. Items are priced between $3 (P148) and $10 (P493) and each shipment is worth about $20,000 (P986,400).

She also has buyers in London and Singapore and plans to carve a market in the United States.

"We started small," Magcalas says.

She and her Swedish husband initially joined small shows. Then they tried to sell locally by setting up shops in Rustan's and Shoemart and by having their items displayed in a number of handicraft stores.

A significant event during the early years of Oricon, derived from the words "oriental contact," was the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in 1991 because it gave birth to a new product: Pinatubo stones.

TARLAC/ B3

EACH stone is chosen for its beauty, shape, color.

Elementary grad tops in duck-raising, balut-making

By Niña Catherine Calleja
Inquirer Southern Luzon

STA. CRUZ, LAGUNA—FOR Froilan "Fred" Garcia, 66, an elementary graduate, "sipag at tiyaga" (hard work and perseverance) are the main secrets of his success in 40 years of duck-raising and *balut*-making.

Garcia owns a poultry business with 4,000 heads of duck, a shop producing at least 20,000 "balut" a week, and other products like salted eggs and "penoy."

Balut is preserved duck's egg with one to three-month-old chick while penoy is preserved duck's egg without chick but only the egg white and yoke.

Garcia delivers his products to provinces like Quezon and Batangas.

In Laguna, buyers from Sta. Rosa City, Nagcarlan and Liliw would pay a visit to arrange for bulk orders of his products.

From his business, Garcia acquired a piggery and expanded his rice field.

Also, he was able to send his six children to college.

100 ducklings

Garcia and his wife, Juanita bought 100 ducklings to raise after their marriage in 1966.

He says he was surprised to see how his ducks multiplied from 100 to 300, and then to thousands.

Garcia's parents and grandparents were also duck-raisers and balut-makers since 1940s.

He says he somehow acquired the skill from them.

After World War II, when he was five years old, his grandparents put up a business producing balut to be sold in Sta. Cruz public market.

"During those times, I would always watch them how they reared ducks and made balut," he recalls.

In 1992, Garcia decided to venture in balut-making.

Many people asking for balut would drop by his house.

People in his community knew him as "*Si Mang Fred, 'yung magbabalut* (the balut-maker)."

Normally, he says, a buyer would order at least 100 ready-to-cook balut.

Timeless business

There was even a period that the eggs in his poultry were not enough so he needed to buy eggs outside this town.

Even in his retiring age, Garcia never falters in monitoring the business.

He says he knew whether a balut was in good or bad quality.

"I always check the kind of work of my hired workers. Often, we conduct assessment, including the workers," he says in Filipino.

FRED Garcia delivers balut to Quezon and Batangas.
PHOTOS BY NINA CATHERINE CALLEJA/ INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

How balut is made

FROILAN GARCIA, WHO HAS been raising ducks for 40 years, explains to the INQUIRER how *balut* is made.

First, at least 10,000 eggs are put inside enclosed baskets in holes. Each basket is covered with cloth.

The holes are collectively called "taung." A taung has 70 holes and each hole can accommodate 1,000 eggs.

After three days, another set of 10,000 eggs are brought inside the taung. The eggs should be left there for ten days.

Garcia says it is important to balance the heat in the taung. Every morning and afternoon, the position of the eggs should be interchanged.

Afterwards, the formed balut should be screened through red light to check for its quality.

Changing technology

To update his knowledge in agriculture and agri-business, Garcia always attends seminars conducted by academic institutions and nongovernment organizations.

One of those seminars, which was held in UP Los Baños, tackled effective means of agricultural production, he says.

Currently, Garcia is the chairperson of the Provincial Agricultural and Fisheries Council in Laguna.

He says poultry business had changed through time.

"After the war, the people here were raising ducks and chickens in their respective houses. The business is not really big," he says.

Garcia says it was in the 1980s that the new poultry system emerged. "All the ducks and chickens are now housed in a big place and to venture in this business, one needs a big amount of capital."

Changing technology would also mean higher expenditures, he adds.

"Before, we used to feed ducks with snails found in the lake. But now, there are specific feeds for ducks that cost P740 per 50 kilos," he says.

Even though he wanted to use the old method in feeding the ducks, he says they were already prohibited from catching snails in Laguna Lake.

"So, we really have no options," he says.

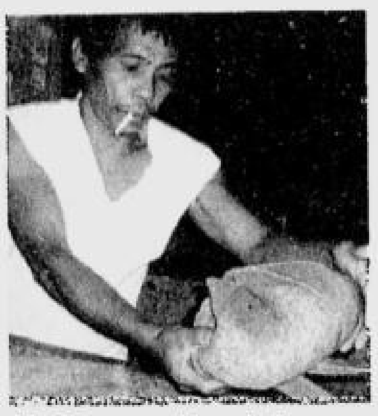
Garcia is passing on the tradition of the business to his six children.

One of his children has established his own poultry business in Victoria, Laguna while the others are helping Garcia in the management and marketing of their balut production here.

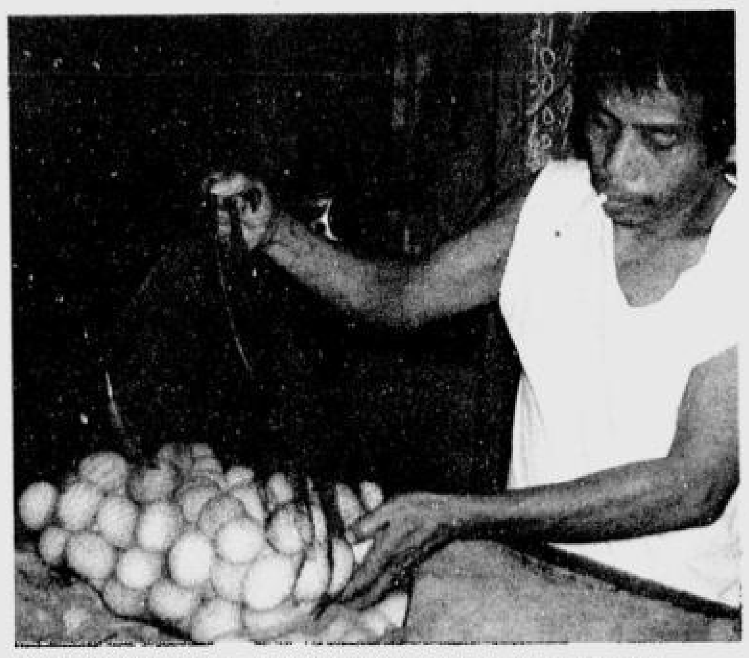
He says he did not want to leave the business that changed their lives.

"The craft of balut-making seems to be in our bloodline," Garcia added.

The Garcia family has hired 10 workers in its business. *Niña Catherine Calleja, Inquirer Southern Luzon*



EGGS wrapped in a cloth are placed in an enclosed basket with holes



THE EGGS should be moved every morning and afternoon.
PHOTOS BY NINA CATHERINE CALLEJA/ INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

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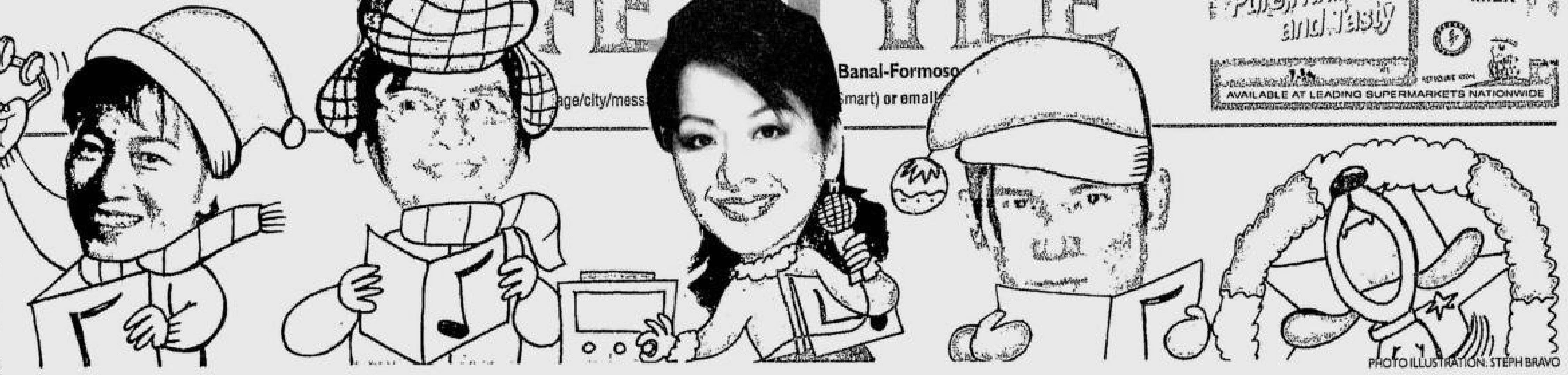

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Missing that good ol' Christmas feeling

HOW MANY CHILDREN these days receive their Christmas gifts under the Christmas tree? How many open their gifts by untangling rolls of ribbons and unfolding layers of wrappers to find the surprising heart of the box? And how many believe that these goodies come from Santa Claus?

These are just a few of our favorite things, scenes and sentiments on Christmas Day that today's generation of children may no longer experience.

Because nowadays Christmas gifts are being handed just about anywhere and anytime. Gifts are not wrapped the way they used to be, no longer building suspense in the heart of the child. Gone is the element of surprise.

And Santa Claus is no longer present in the child's world, whether in reality or in imagination, but only exists in an old Christmas song.

We surveyed a few people, ranging in age from their 20s to 60s, to find out the things that they miss most about the holidays of their youth and following are their wistful answers.

I will surely miss my Inang's superbly delicious homemade *kakanins*, most especially her *sapin-sapin*! Nobody can do them like she did. —**Jessie Sincioco,** *chef and restaurateur*

The feeling of that child in yourself when all you wanted was to be surrounded by people you loved. —**Henri Calayag,** *hairstylist*

The company of loved ones now departed; not having enough time to spend with the kids due to the holiday rush; not having enough opportunities for peace and solitude to spiritually prepare myself for Christ's advent. —**Rina Go,** *fashion designer and entrepreneur*

The time when my cousins and I would go around the neighborhood to sing Christmas carols and earn some money to watch a movie or buy some toys. —**Robby Carmona,** *fashion show director*

The clan gathering, the family reunion. I also miss the old *parol* of bamboo sticks and *papel de japon*. And the sight of *bibingka* and *puto bumbong* with *tsokolate eh* or *salabat* at the church patio. These are rare now. —**Cesar Hernando,** *filmmaker and Fine Arts Instructor*

The traditional *parol* made of bamboo covered with Japanese paper with intricate cuts on all edges and its tail. I also miss the genuine Chinese ham Hoc Shio. —**Melvyn Calderon,** *photographer*

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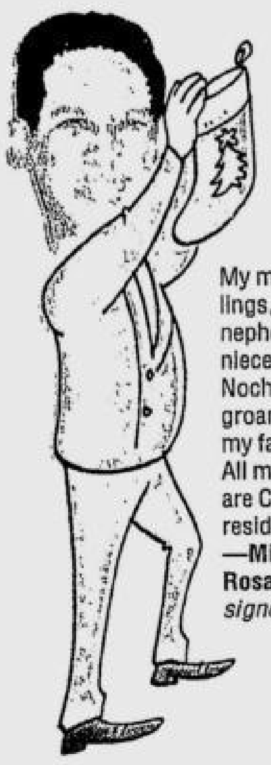
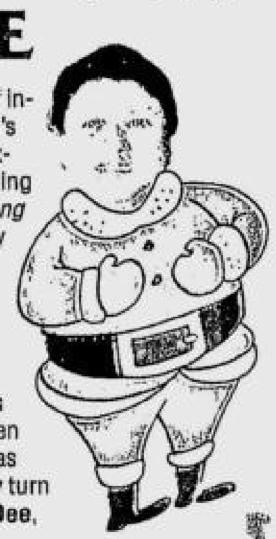


My mom, 11 siblings, 15 nephews, six nieces and the Noche Buena table groaning with all my favorite food. All my loved ones are Californian residents now. **—Mike de la Rosa,** *fashion designer*

The holiness of the season is gone. Family bonding has disappeared. There's too much commercialism everywhere. The Misa de Gallo is so noisy. And even the weather does not give an atmosphere of Christmas. **—Fr. Dennis Batacandolo,** *Stigmatine parish priest*

My dead friends and all my friends abroad. **—Patrick Rosas,** *makeup artist*

PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEPH BRAVO AND ALBERT RODRIGUEZ



I miss the spirit of innocence in a child's Christmas. The excitement of receiving gifts (especially *ang pao*), trying to pry open, shaking each one and guessing what each one could be, likewise counting the days before I could open them on Christmas day. Today it's my turn to give. **—Rikki Dee,** *restaurateur*

The innocence of Christmas. Like when receiving gifts which I believed were from Los Tres Reyes Magos. **—Amadís Ma. Guerrero,** *culture and travel writer*

The coolness of the breeze. I also miss the old-style carolers and the *belen.* **—Sarah Babiera,** *career woman*

The children caroling with improvised musical instruments. I miss the elaborate wrappings of gifts. Now there is less Christmas décor, less Christmas lights and fireworks, less Christmas shopping. **—Marites Comorro,** *NGO worker*

Uniformly cool weather with little rain. Typhoons alternating with heat spoil December and Christmas. **—Queenie Lee Chua,** *math professor*

Missing that good ol' Christmas feeling

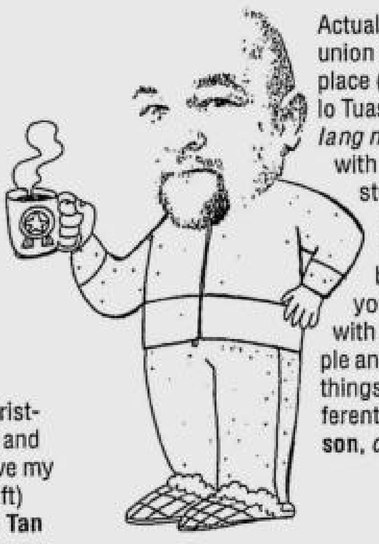
Is Christmas not what it used to be? Has it really lost its old luster? What do you miss most about Christmas?

Being a kid. Back in Samar, I would go from house to house for Christmas gifts. We had this "paramihan" contest among my friends so I would go last to my godparents' place expecting something big. It turned out that they would only give me 25 centavos, and I would hate them for a year. But come next Christmas I would go to their place again with renewed hope. **—Dennis Lustico,** *fashion designer*

With the advent of e-mail and e-cards, I miss Christmas cards arriving weeks before Christmas day. It used to be so much fun every time you open and find out which card looked really good and who wrote the most sentimental greeting or the wackiest! Receiving Christmas cards is the best reminder of what Christmas is. **—Ito Kish,** *interior designer*

My parents and my mom's Noche Buena dishes of *morcon, callos* and *relleno.* **—Myrna Segismundo,** *chef*

My parents' big Christmas dinner parties and when I get to receive my *ang pao* (money gift) from them. **—Lulu Tan Gan,** *fashion designer*



Actually I just had a family reunion at my grandmother's place (father's side), Consuelo Tuason. It was great. *Kulang na lang lola*'s turkey with her famous Spanish stuffing, like ground meat paté, mushroom, capers, olives, ham, bologna and what-have-you. The ham was cooked with sugar, crushed pineapple and beer. I still cook these things but hers was really different and better. **—Ed Quimson,** *chef and restaurateur*

The smell and feel of real pine tree for a Christmas tree. **—Carol Sy,** *businesswoman*

Christmas back when life was simple, and the world even more so. The moving Christmas displays on top of Manila COD and later Anson's were truly delightful to watch. We'd get all bundled up in sweaters and take the family car and drive around to see all the Christmas lights. Also, carolers seem to be a dying breed, or maybe caroling just doesn't go with condo living. **—Myrza Sison,** *magazine editor*

My family used to live in a depressed area in Mandaluyong, and the neighborhood celebrated Christmas like one big family. We greeted each other and exchanged food. I miss the crowd, noise and chaos. **—Vincent Padilla,** *artist*

The simple joys of being together with my family, the laughter and the company of my sisters and their families, and the many gifts that we would open on Christmas Eve. **—Annie Ringor,** *PR practitioner*

I miss being a child. **—Joey Samson,** *fashion designer*

When I was living in the US, my partner and I used to prepare Christmas dinner for a group of homeless people and people with AIDS, who otherwise would have spent the day alone. I miss the joy we felt doing it. **—Ito Curata,** *fashion designer*

The days when it was actually cold! I remember Simbang Gabi from Christmases past when the cool, nippy air would set the mood for the holidays. Now, you can really feel the effects of global warming. **—Pauline Juan,** *magazine editor*

As a child… getting excited to open my gifts under the tree on Christmas day. Sometimes I would secretly open some gifts and peek before rewrapping them. It was the surprise element that I loved most. **—Monique Toda,** *hotel PR director*

My mom during Christmas. We, her children, would feel the warmth and love as she personally prepared our gifts and food for the whole day, and opened house for relatives, friends and employees. Everyone went home with gifts. **—Bobby Novenario,** *fashion designer*

Caroling. Way back in high school, caroling was something every class would look forward to. It was more than just singing Christmas songs; it was a way of getting to know our classmates better. After greeting them with songs, our classmates' families would open their homes to us and would let us feast on *merienda* they lovingly prepared. Not only was food shared, but stories were exchanged, childhood photos excitedly shown and memories formed. **—Jenalyn Antonio-Silverio,** *lawyer*

The time that I believed in Santa Claus! It made Christmas more magical. But now that I have a son, it will soon be my turn to play old Santa. **—Amina Aranaz-Alunan,** *bag designer and new mom*

Christmas has just gotten so commercial that I miss the simple pleasures we used to do. My friends and I would go to Simbang Gabi then go for a morning ride on our horses, followed by a Pinoy breakfast of *tsokolate eh* with *ensaymada* or *champorado* with *tuyo.* **—Vittorio Barba,** *fashion designer*

Being part of the Christmas Eve preparations at home. Being in the restaurant business, I have to attend to the takeout orders of our guests for their Noche Buena feasts since it's the busiest time of the year. It feels great just the same because that makes us part of their Christmas celebrations. But, I really miss Christmas carolers and getting *aguinaldo* from my *ninongs* and *ninangs* and presents from Santa Claus. **—Miguel Alba,** *restaurateur*

My loved ones who have passed on and the time when Christmas wasn't so commercialized. When there was more of the old traditions and going around visiting relatives was a breeze because traffic wasn't as bad. **—Mila Magsaysay-Valenzuela,** *publicist*

The smell, look and feel of real Christmas trees and the traditional lanterns made of bamboo, Japanese paper and cellophane. **—Vangie Austria,** *artist*

Being able to go up to the snow in Squaw Valley and skiing, having fun in the snow with the whole family. I miss watching football games and indulging in family gambling card games, feasting till we have to unbuckle our belts and dozing off by the fireplace. **—Michael Wong,** *restaurateur*

The Christmases when my cousins and I were young and we still had our lives dictated by our parents, so everyone would happily spend the holidays together. These days we all have different lives in various parts of the world so it's harder to gather everyone and be a complete family. **—Cat Juan,** *beauty editor*

1. The time to shop and do the tree 2. The tiny hand-dipped *yema* balls in hard caramel 3. Roast goose 4. Corned beef *nilaga* 5. Homemade, imperfect cakes by real people—I like the human factor to be evident 6. Going to Hi-Top supermarket 7. More important, I miss my dad, Handy 8. Most important, I miss the Christ in Christmas! **—Nancy Reyes-Lumen,** *chef and food magazine editor*

The Christmases that brought the whole family together, where everyone was healthy, and when being happy was simple. As it is, and perhaps because of aging and our deteriorating environment, the reality of illness in one's family somehow has a sobering effect on one's holiday spirit." **—Dr. Diana Cua,** *oncologist*

My dad, Ding Cruz. He was shot dead in Pricesmart, QC, in March 2005. It was very sudden and we were not prepared. His ultimate wish was to have lots of grandkids and it only came true after his passing. It would've been a great Christmas seeing how happy he is with them. **—Trisha Cuason,** *bag designer and entrepreneur*

Christmas caroling, visiting my *ninong* and *ninang*, joining all the parlor games at family reunions, anticipating the gifts from my parents, looking forward to a new set of clothes. I miss the enchanting Christmas spirit that only the young can appreciate. **—Nestor O. Jardin,** *president of Cultural Center of the Philippines*

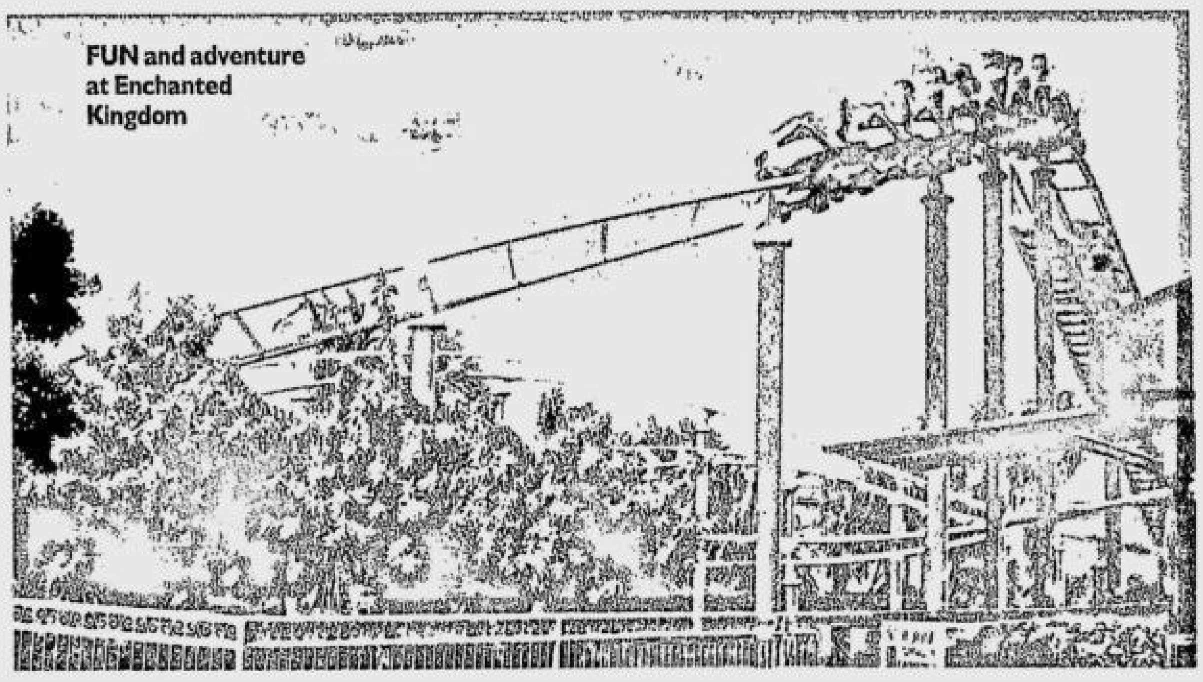
When I was a child, I would spend time with all my cousins who visited from abroad for the holidays. Our custom was to anticipate the chaotic gift opening after Mass at midnight on Dec. 24. We would spend the break on the beach, running hermit crab races and playing *sungka*. We still talk about those fun-filled days until today. **—Vicki de Leon,** *boutique owner*

Spectacular theme-park Christmas

ENJOY A BROADway Christmas as Enchanted Kingdom and the Trumpets Theater Group delight you with a special all-new musical play on Dec. 22, 28 and 29.

Join Blackbeard, the Pirate, Santa & Mrs. Claus, Astro and Alfie on their journey to find the best Christmas gift ever.

Enchanted Kingdom's Rialto Theater transforms into a thrilling landscape of space battles between humans and invading bio bugs in "Perils on Akryls." Join the rescue team as they save Akryls City from strange parasitic creatures.



FUN and adventure at Enchanted Kingdom

The Spettacolo Pirotecnico Christmas Edition, the 2005 award-winning fireworks and laser-light spectacle, is back to thrill audiences anew!

With all pyrotechnics and laser-light effects, the 15-minute dazzler lights up the skies on Dec. 23; 25, Christmas Day; 30, Rizal Day; and Jan. 1, 2007, New Year's Day.

In "Lou Hilario's Magic Show" on Dec. 25-27, master illusionist and magician Lou Hilario shares his magic with audiences, making Enchanted Kingdom a truly magical wonderland for everyone.

"The Enchanted Storybook" opens up a world of magical storytelling at Enchanted Kingdom all Saturdays and Sundays of December at Midway Boardwalk.

Famous celebrities will grace the occasion including Rez Cortez on Dec. 23, Regine Tolentino on Dec. 26, Cherry Pie Picache on Dec. 27, Gladys Reyes on Dec. 28, and Janeena Chan on Dec. 28 and 29.

Winners of the 8th Annual Aliptaptap Storytelling Competition will also be featured as guest storytellers on Dec. 24 and 31.

Musical shows by Enchanted Kingdom's resident bravura entertainers, top showbands and a string quartet are also ongoing, including the musical "My Own Christmas."

Lastly, enjoy delicious holiday fare at our wide variety of restaurants like Galactic Treats, Launch Time, Amazon Grill, Feltman's, and Ice Age Ice Cream.

Holiday revelry at hotel

THERE IS MUCH TO see, hear and taste at one of Manila's leading deluxe hotels throughout the holiday season.

Aside from the spectacular Christmas tree at the lobby of Pan Pacific Hotel—a sight to behold with its dazzling lights and colors—music and rhythm also await everyone here.

The hotel's lobby comes alive with the harmonious voices of the Butler Chorale singing Christmas carols and the rhythmic steps of the Butler Dancers daily, from 5-6 p.m., with performances up to Christmas Day.

On Christmas Eve, Pan Pacific hosts a eucharistic celebration amid the greens and blooms of the Gazebo Garden, capped by the traditional Noche Buena feast at the Pacific Lounge.

But why wait for Christmas Eve? Savor holiday flavors every day at Pan Pacific, with chocolates, pastries, fruit cakes, spiced-up nuts and fruits, and those scrumptious Filipino favorites *bibingka* and puto bumbong available at hotel outlets.

As general manager Richard Masselin says: "This December, it's all about taste, spicy and sweet, at Pan Pacific Hotel."

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Christmas Brings Good Tidings to People with Diabetes

Christmas moves everyone's spirit in simultaneous gestures of giving, sharing and bonding. There is a special air about it no other seasons have. Such is the spirit that Christmas brings to the world, together with the merriment of feasting on overflowing foods, drinks and gifts. The heart as we know it, can give and receive as much love the season can offer, but food and drinks that come with it are best taken in moderation especially among people suffering from diabetes.

Diabetes mellitus is a disorder of metabolism in which there is lack of insulin production and/or an inadequate response to insulin, a hormone responsible for converting sugar, starches and other foods into energy. It transports glucose from the blood into the cells, or the sugar that the body needs as its primary fuel. People with diabetes are specially prone to fatalities of cardiovascular events such as heart attack and stroke if not maintained daily on medications. One of the reasons behind this is that their lack of glucose causes high levels of circulating cholesterol and lipids that lead to the development of atherosclerosis or blocked arteries that decreases blood flow. They need twice as much caring through added protection that can be combined with their anti-diabetic drug. **Aspilets,** a gift valued as **the right lifetime partner**, is Christmas' good tidings to people with diabetes. It has worldwide documented preventive benefits against cardiovascular diseases by effectively maintaining normal blood flow to the body through prevention of plaque formation and maintenance of normal blood flow. Aspilets contains antithrombotic properties. Its action is better articulated in the vernacular as "***pampalabnaw ng dugo***". Without the smooth and adequate amount of blood flowing to the entire human body, any organ that is originally healthy will soon fail to function properly because the whole system relies on it for food and nourishment.

Even people with diabetes can have a fruitful life with a healthy heart. Maintaining clean living and medication plus a daily dose of Aspilets assures them of continuous blood flow to feed their heart. From a healthy heart stems a quality **LIFE** . . . *the most precious gift of all.*

**American Heart Association; Diabetes, Heart Disease and Stroke: "What about other stroke risk factors?" p.7*

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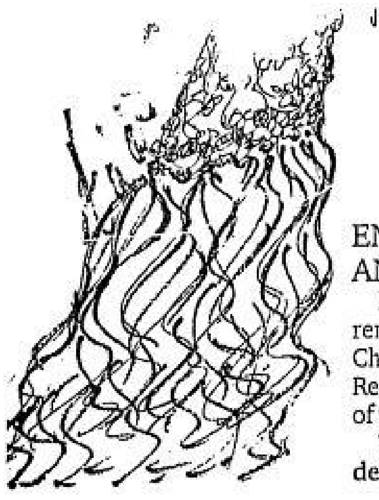


Milestones

We welcome announcements of weddings and engagements. Submit names of engaged couple, names of parents, date and place of wedding, and gown designer along with a photo of the couple and a sketch of the bridal gown, if any, to the INQUIRER*, P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City. E-mail to lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. A photo of the bride and groom is required if the wedding has already taken place. Announcements will be printed depending on space availability and at no cost to the senders.*

ENCARNACION GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

Emden and Mila Encarnacion will renew their vows Dec. 27 at UP Chapel Parish of the Holy Sacrifice. Reception will follow at the University of the Philippines Bahay ng Alumni.

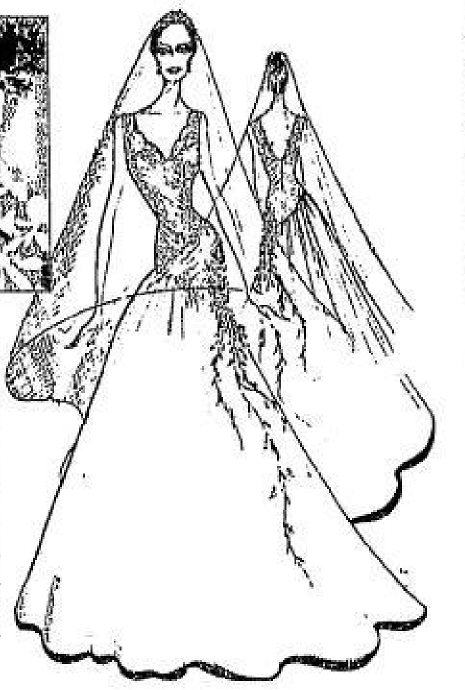
The bride will wear an **Eddie Baddeo** creation.

RODAS 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Nestor and **Maritess Rodas** celebrated recently their silver wedding anniversary at Our Lady of Assumption in the Hills Parish, Asuncion, Maasin City, Southern Leyte. With the couple are their children **Shane, Safa, Vince** and **JR**. The reception was held at **Reden Marante**'s resthouse.

CRUZ-TAN

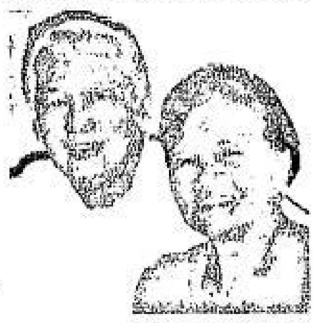
Daniel Allan Cruz, son of **Danilo** and **Emy Cruz**, will wed **Candy Tan**, daughter of **Redentor** and **Evelyn Tan**, Jan. 2 at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Batangas City. Reception will follow at the Hotel Pontefino, Batangas City. The bride will wear a creation by **Eric Pineda**.



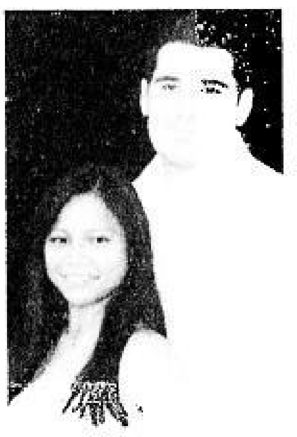
VILLAVERDE 50th ANNIVERSARY

Engineer **Manuel** and **Carmencita Villaverde** celebrated recently their golden wedding anniversary at Plaza Ibarra, QC. The mass was officiated by Bishop **Teodoro Bacani**; Fr. **Crispin Cordero**, SVD; and Fr. **Rodrigo Eguia**.

ISORENA GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

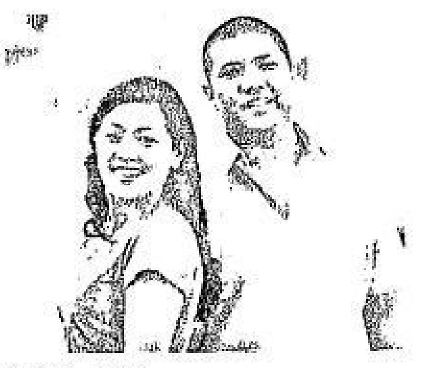


Rollie and **Mameng Isorena** celebrated recently their golden anniversary at the Abbey of Our Lady of Monserrat (San Beda Church).



SHARKEY-DEL MUNDO

John Joseph Sharkey Jr., son of **John Sharkey Sr.** and **Marie Humes**, will wed **Rejina M. del Mundo**, daughter of **Mario Estrella** and **Evelyn Mariano**, Feb. 17, at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception (Manila Cathedral), Intramuros, Manila. Reception will be at The Sofitel Philippine Plaza, CCP Complex, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City, Manila.



GRACIA-AOA

Ryan Eric A. de Gracia, son of **Manolo** and **Nardina de Gracia**, will wed **Gracita D. Aoa**, daughter of **Serafin** and **Teresita Aoa**, Dec. 27, at the San Agustin Church, Intramuros. Reception will follow at Father Blanco's Garden, Intramuros.

UY-PATTAWI

James Uy, Mr. and Ms **Pacifico Uy**, and **Rod Angelica Pattawi**, daughter of **Rogelio Pattawi**, will exchange vows Dec. 29, at Ermita de San Jacinto. Reception will follow at Hotel Roma. **Ching Pattawi** designed the bridal gown.

ANSWER TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD

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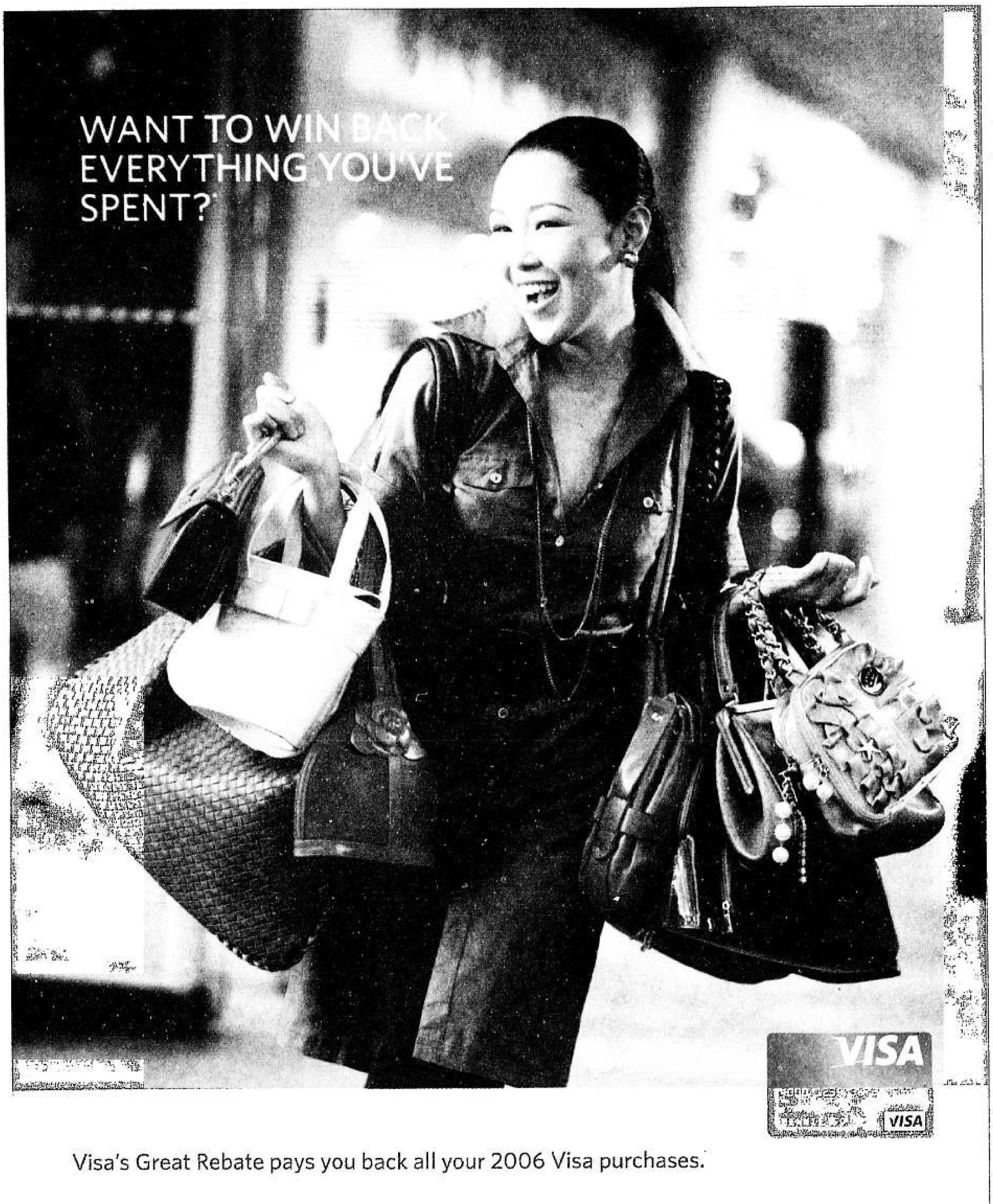

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c. Last 4 digits of the account number
d. Amount of transaction
e. Date of transaction
f. Time of transaction (24-hour format)
Ex. VISA Mennie So, 400000, 1234, 1000.25 ,111206, 1808
Visa transactions may also be registered through the Promo website. (www.hblmasia.com/visa)
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Promo period: November 12, 2006 - January 30, 2007

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Per DTI-NCR Permit no. 4136, Series of 2006. See posters for details.
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Sunday LifeSt

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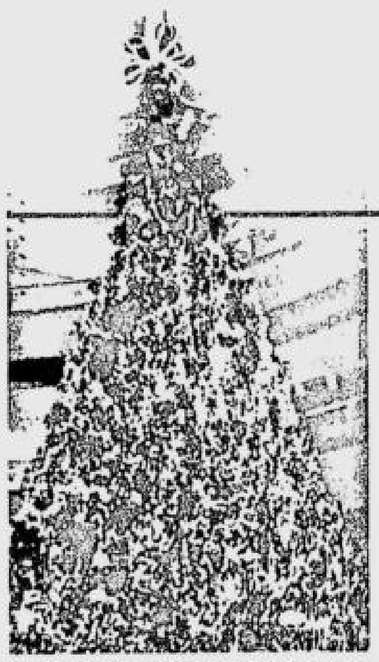
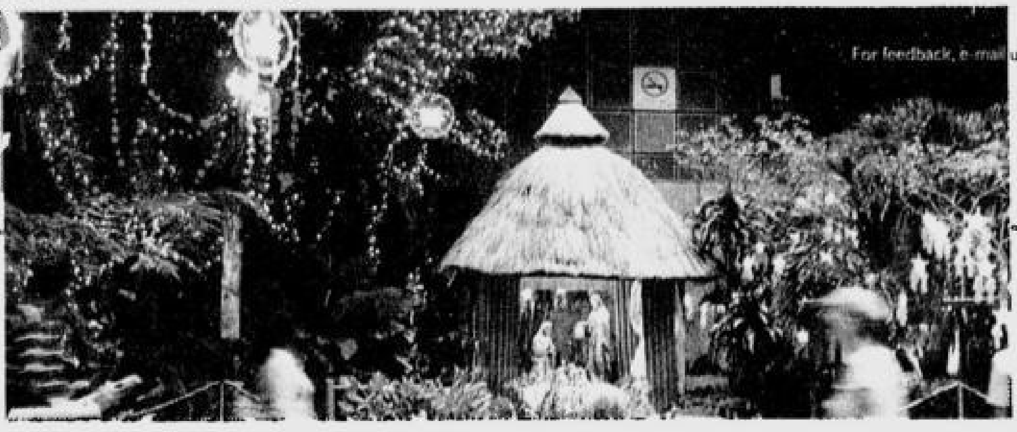
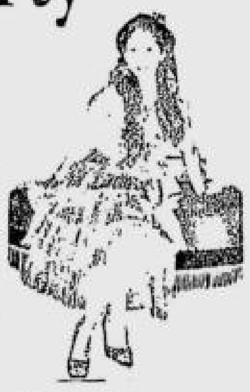
Text us your feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)


ORCHARD Road Christmas tree on display

IT'S a bug's life at the Singapore Garden Festival.


BRONZE winner Christmas in a Philippine village by Nonito Dolera

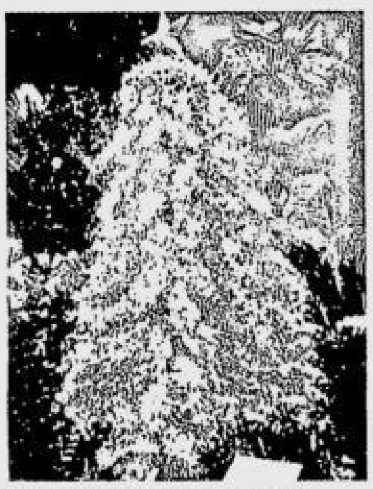
Unique Yuletide party in Singapore



TESSA!

Tessa Prieto-Valdes

MARDI GRAS-THEMED Christmas tree at Clarke Quay


CHRISTMAS tree made of orchids at the Singapore Garden Festival

CELEBRATE A TROPICAL-STYLE Christmas at Uniquely Singapore. It may be a tiny country but it's big on various attractions of all kinds. On board the DHL Aerophile Balloon Ride, you get a breathtaking, 360-degree panoramic view of Singapore's jubilantly lit cityscape. It makes everyone's spirits literally soar sky-high.

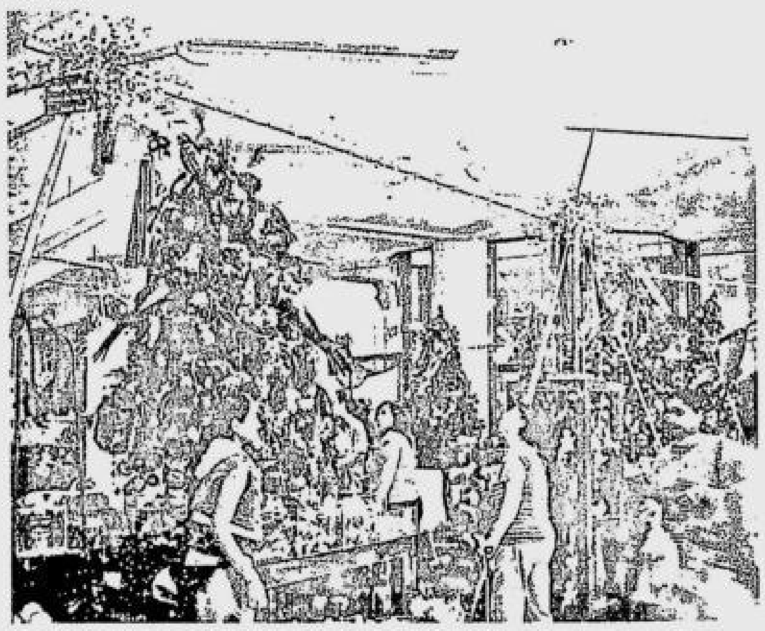
This year's festivities included the very first Singapore Garden Festival at Suntec City Convention Centre. This biennial festival is the first in the world to bring together top international landscape and garden designers and gigantic displays of floral creations and beautifully adorned Christmas trees. Also displayed was a showcase of Southeast Asia's rich biodiversity of tropical orchids.

Festival highlights featured the Best of Show Designer Gardens comprising landscape and fantasy gardens that included an entry from the Philippines by multi-awarded designer **Nonito Dolera**. His design captured the Christmas celebration in the Philippines, focused mainly on the Nativity.

Nonito's garden was decked out with a *belen* sitting atop a bed of poinsettias with life-size wood-

UNIQUE/ D2

It may be a tiny country but it's big on attractions of all kinds, especially this Christmas


MULTICOLORED Christmas trees at Robinsons Department Store

And to think this would not have
possible without the tireless
Master Danongan Kalanduy
effortlessly playing his ku
to see, paving the way fo
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ern California.

The band members consist of Grandpa Allen, 72, a retired pastor from the big island of Kailua-Kona Hawaii, his son Michael, and Michael's children Leilani,
The band is named

Theater located in
District, San Francisco.

It was a thrilling, if not exhilarating experience, sitting in the front row with cameras blinking and camcorders rolling, all the while watching the percussionists and dancers do their thing.

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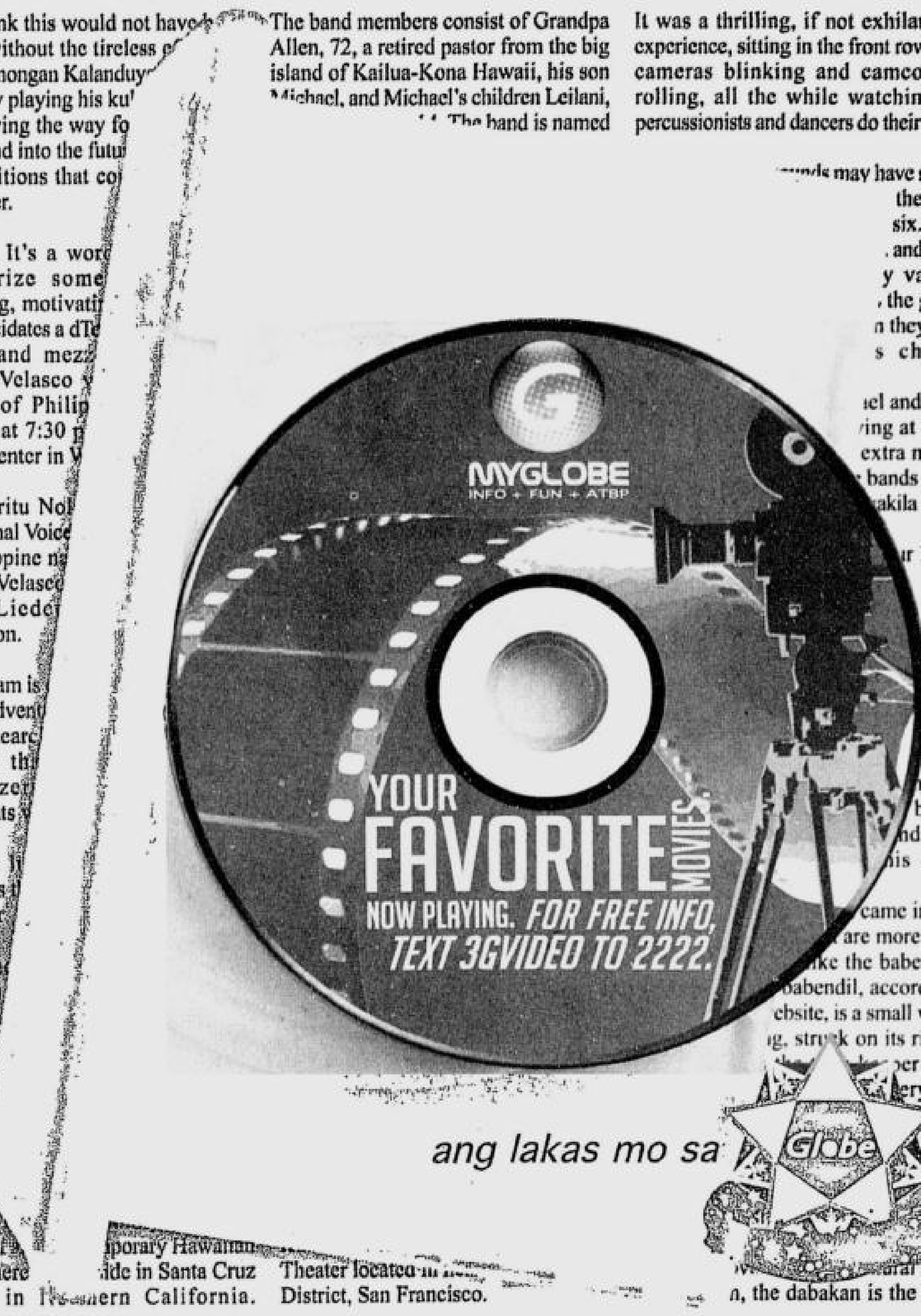

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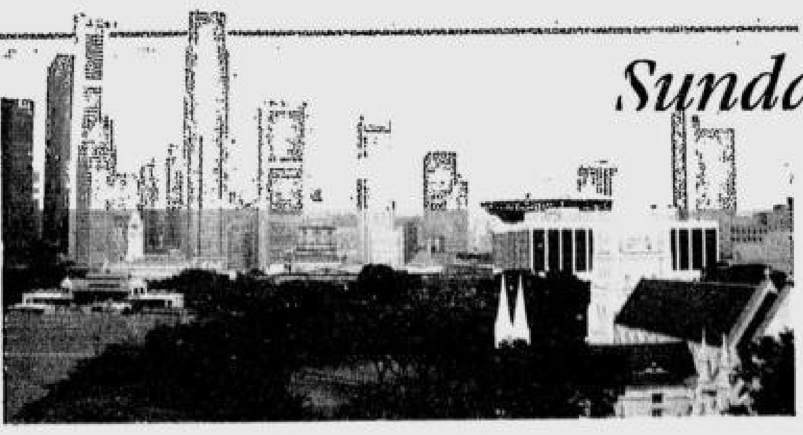

PICTURESQUE view from the Swissotel, The Stamford

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Second, COGEL is uniquely 100% VCO within the softgel. It is leak-free compared with hard gel capsules or bottled preparations. Just take it with a glass of water, and COGEL glides down fast and easy.

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Take COGEL at least three times a day for better health and wellness. Just remember to store COGEL at room temperature since pure VCO solidifies in cold storage and can melt when temperature exceeds 50° C. Keeping COGEL at room temperature ensures that the softgel would stay the same and retain its potency.

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SUNDAY CROSSWORD

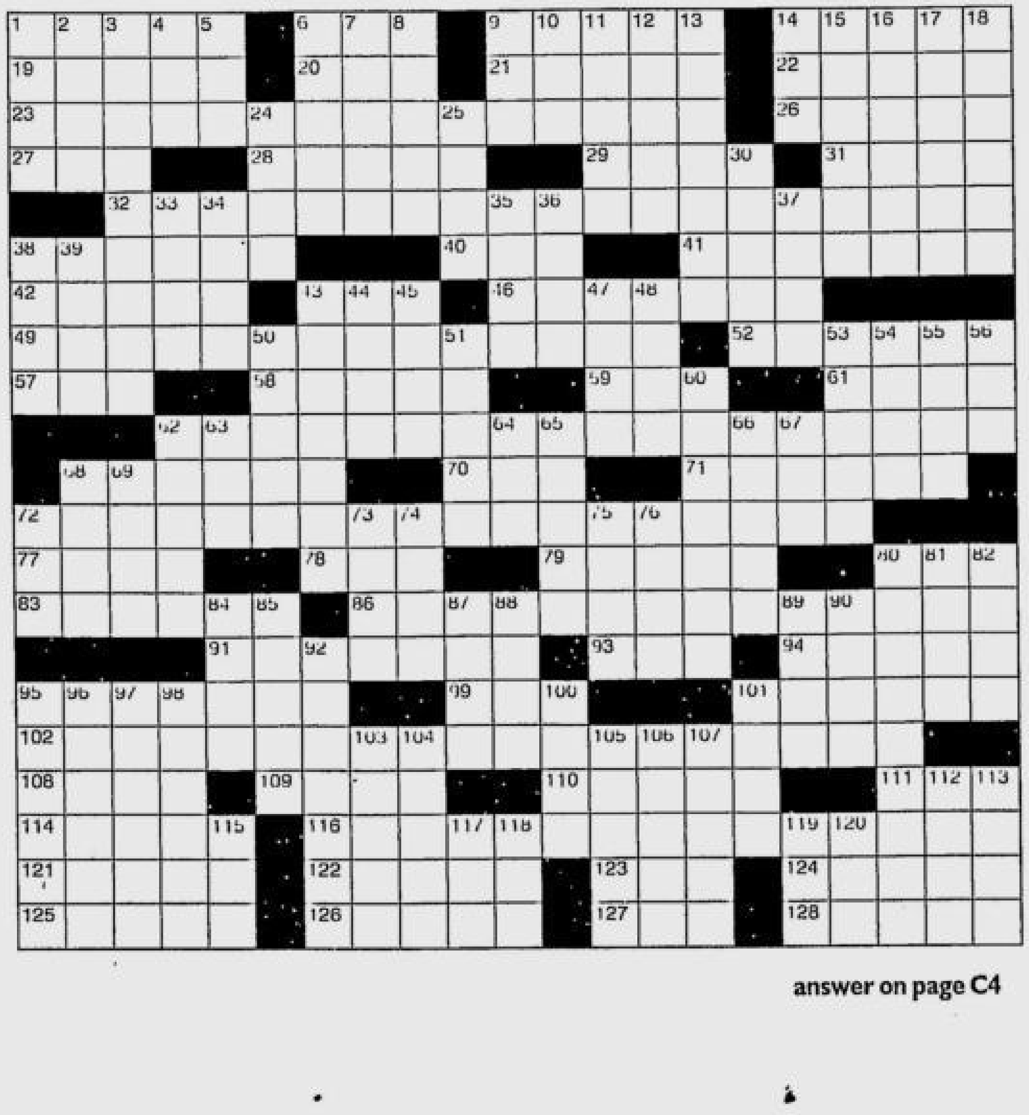
PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo — VISITOR

ACROSS

1 Greeted the new day
6 "The View" network
9 706, to Cato
14 "Star Wars" director
19 Ali, for one
20 Pep rally shout
21 Avila locale
22 Establish as law
23 Negotiating sessions for Republicans and Democrats?
26 From then until now
27 "Pale" drink
28 17-syllable verse
29 Swedish-based chain
31 Pizza cooker
32 Fan of rich, buttery rolls?
38 L.A.'s NBA team
40 Catch, as a crook
41 Binds tightly
42 Big name in fake fat
43 Hawaii's Mauna —
46 Cheapens
49 Italian cheese sampler?
52 Fed the fire
57 Suffix with lion
58 Golden — (senior citizens)
59 Plant pouch
61 Pottery material
62 Nice restaurant quality?
68 Promotional links
70 Food scrap
71 "— still time"
72 State of mind that causes dejection?
77 Love god
78 Yale alum
79 — the run (munch while in motion)
80 Stephen of "Danny Boy"
83 Most broad
86 Pub in Little Rock?
91 Many moisturizers
93 Soon-to-be grads
94 Grant entry to
95 Quantify
99 Call — night
101 Cause of weather upheaval
102 Unrelenting opponent's activity?
108 Forest unit
109 "The Simpsons" bus driver
110 "That's — excuse for ..."
111 Wellness gp.
114 Parts in films
116 Celebrated region around the South Pole?
121 Green bar garnish
122 Unwritten exams
123 Grassy tract
124 Coffer
125 Rain ice pellets
126 Carnival features
127 Ave. intersectors
128 Holiday visitor hidden in eight answers in this puzzle

DOWN

1 "SOS" band
2 Make turbid
3 Birds that feed on parasitic ticks
4 Caspian, e.g.
5 Foul up
6 Divas' solos
7 Grounds
8 R&B singer — Khan
9 "Spring ahead" abbr.
10 IRS hiree
11 L.A. locale
12 Singer Carr
13 Bugs
14 French 101 article
15 Coalitions
16 Oil painting
17 Acquiesce
18 Office pros
24 "Pay — amount"
25 Georgia politician Sam
30 Buenos —
33 Print shop unit
34 Writer Sarah — Jewett
35 Smidgens
36 Help in a heist
37 Force to go
38 Run easily
39 "Oh, woe!"
43 Chef Emeril
44 Wallet thickeners
45 Gillette shaver
47 Foremost
48 William Saroyan's "My Name Is —"
50 Composer Camille Saint- —
51 "So — to offend ..."
53 Earth color
54 Painter Paul
55 Hearing things
56 Henna, e.g.
60 Becomes fond of, with "to"
62 In itself
63 Falsehood
64 Chorus syllable
65 When some newscasts start
66 Turn off to one side
67 — XING (street sign)
68 Actress Garr
69 Apple MP3 player
72 Dawn drops
73 Jai — (game like handball)
74 Robert De —
75 See 76-Across
76 With 75-Across, Russian news agency
80 Make more taut
81 Land of the shamrock
82 The "A" of A.D.
84 Swivel
85 Human body's trunk
87 Work with yarn
88 "The Thin Man" pooch
89 "For — care ..."
90 — diagram (math graph)
92 Determine the presence of, as in a lab
95 Subways
96 Sign up
97 Penguin variety
98 Album cover
100 "Jumpin' Jack Flash, it's — ..."
101 Poet Pound
103 Old arcade name
104 Wanderer
105 Pearly gems
106 Opus for nine
107 Teeny bits
112 Haze
113 Eight: Prefix
115 Harden
117 Bullring cry
118 Abbr. on a ship
119 Some colas
120 Dance bit?



answer on page C4

Unique Yuletide party in Singapore

From page D1

en sculptures of the Holy Family arranged centerstage. Manila palm trees with traditional *parol* or lanterns surrounded the landscape. This bronze prize-winning entry was one of the most photographed installations at the festival. I was proud to stand in front of it and promote our country to all passersby.

To greet the New Year, a brand-new entertainment center recently opened to enthrall visitors with a lasting impression of the history, legacy and brewing process of world-acclaimed Tiger Beer. Freshly brewed and cheerfully served, TigerLive is an interactive tour that ends with beer-tapping lessons at the stylish gallery bar.

A willing volunteer, I was a bartender for a minute, learning to tap beer into a chilled glass and pouring at a precise angle to get just the right amount of foam on top of the glass. Now all I need to learn is how to balance 10 glasses of Tiger beer on a tray!

Located at St. James Power Station, TigerLive building is a former power plant—just like Rockwell—that has been converted into the newest nightspot destination with its series of bars and restaurants.

Another plus factor about this place is its close proximity to VivoCity, the newest gigantic mall in Singapore. Making waves among local and foreign shopping fans, VivoCity is just filled with cinemas, food court stalls and Singapore's biggest hypermarket. Put me anywhere in the world and I'll find a way to shop away, whether it's VivoCity or SM City!

Food highlights

It's amazing how much Singaporeans love to eat, so every other establishment seems to be a restaurant or a food outlet. The food highlights of this trip were Imperial Herbal Restaurant, which served healing dishes to help cure ailments, Jade Restaurant at the beautiful Fullerton Hotel and Le Restaurant at Crazy Horse in Paris.

Renowned Jade Restaurant chef **Thomas Chai** presented a gastronomically exciting menu of nouvelle Chinese cuisine. Dishes like Seafood Consommé in Young Coconut, Crisp fried Stone River Marble Goby in Light Soy and King Prawns with sautéed Fish Noodles were a delicious treat.

Tagged as the "Soul of the City," Clarke Quay is the evening epicenter of this bustling city. Exquisite choices of restaurants, wine bars, entertainment hotspots and chill-out places are all found clustered along the edge of the Singapore River. The complex is decorated with its Mardi Gras Christmas theme and several brightly colored trees that line a playful water fountain. The hottest dance joint is definitely Ministry of Sound, where the lines to get in on Saturdays are just blocks long.

Billed as the most beautiful and artistic nude show, "Crazy Horse Paris" highlights the beauty of the female form through lighting, spectacular costumes and strikingly choreographed routines. As one of Clarke Quay's attractions, "Crazy Horse Paris" has raised the level of dancing into an aesthetic and erotic art form. With all dancers possessing a classical ballet background, the show is indeed incredible. I have gained new ideas on costumes and matching moves to entice my husband **Dennis** into rewarding me with a wonderful Christmas gift.

Newly refurbished museum

My holiday trip included a visit to the newly refurbished National Museum of Singapore. Integrated with the old structure and innovatively renovated with state-of-the-art facilities, the museum introduces cutting-edge and captivating ways of presenting history and featured artists and exhibitions. Interactive areas create lively energy in what would otherwise be dead places in the museum.

The opening Festival Exhibition is "Maria Theresia, Mother Empress of Habsburg Austria," which runs until the end of January 2007. Almost like my real name, Maria Theresia was quite a woman, achieving the creation of a great nation without suffering the loss of her femininity. The lavish rococo designs and tapestry and even the writing desk of her infamous daughter, Marie Antoinette, are on display.

In "A Celebration of Singapore Music," the museum hosts different artists who perform for all the visitors. One of the most talented composers and arrangers (for local musicians) featured was longtime Singapore resident **Babes Conde**, who is actually an expat Filipino. In fact, he was singing a Pinoy song while we were touring.

Singapore is exploding with cheerful yuletide spirit and spectacular Christmas lights. Free HiPPO Tours on topless buses take visitors around the city for the "Christmas Light-Up 2006," showcasing two distinct themes of an enchanted Christmas Garden and Christmas Bells.

With all that positive energy, it's great to welcome the New Year at this unique place. May we all have the true meaning of Christmas shining in our hearts, wherever we will be observing the celebration of Christ's birth.

E-mail me at seaprincess@inquirer.com.ph.

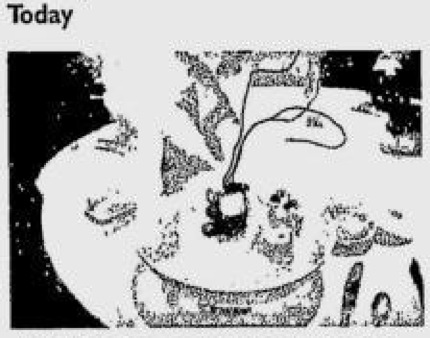
CHRISTMAS table setting made of poinsettias and other greenery

ARTIST Kurt Wenner showing how a street painting is truly art!

COOL celebration of a hibernating garden by Michael Bruce from the US

POSING in front of the giant DHL hot air balloon before boarding

JADE Restaurant chef Thomas Chai and Raymund Lombos of Woman's Today



AMAZING dessert spread by chef Thomas Chai

HOMEMADE
a celebration of singapore music

A CELEBRATION of Singapore Music with Babes Conde performing

TIGER bartender teaching the Sea Princess how to tap

TIGERLIVE publicists Thomas Ng, Wong Wan Yee, Wayne Tang, two Tiger Beer Girls and Gary Yang

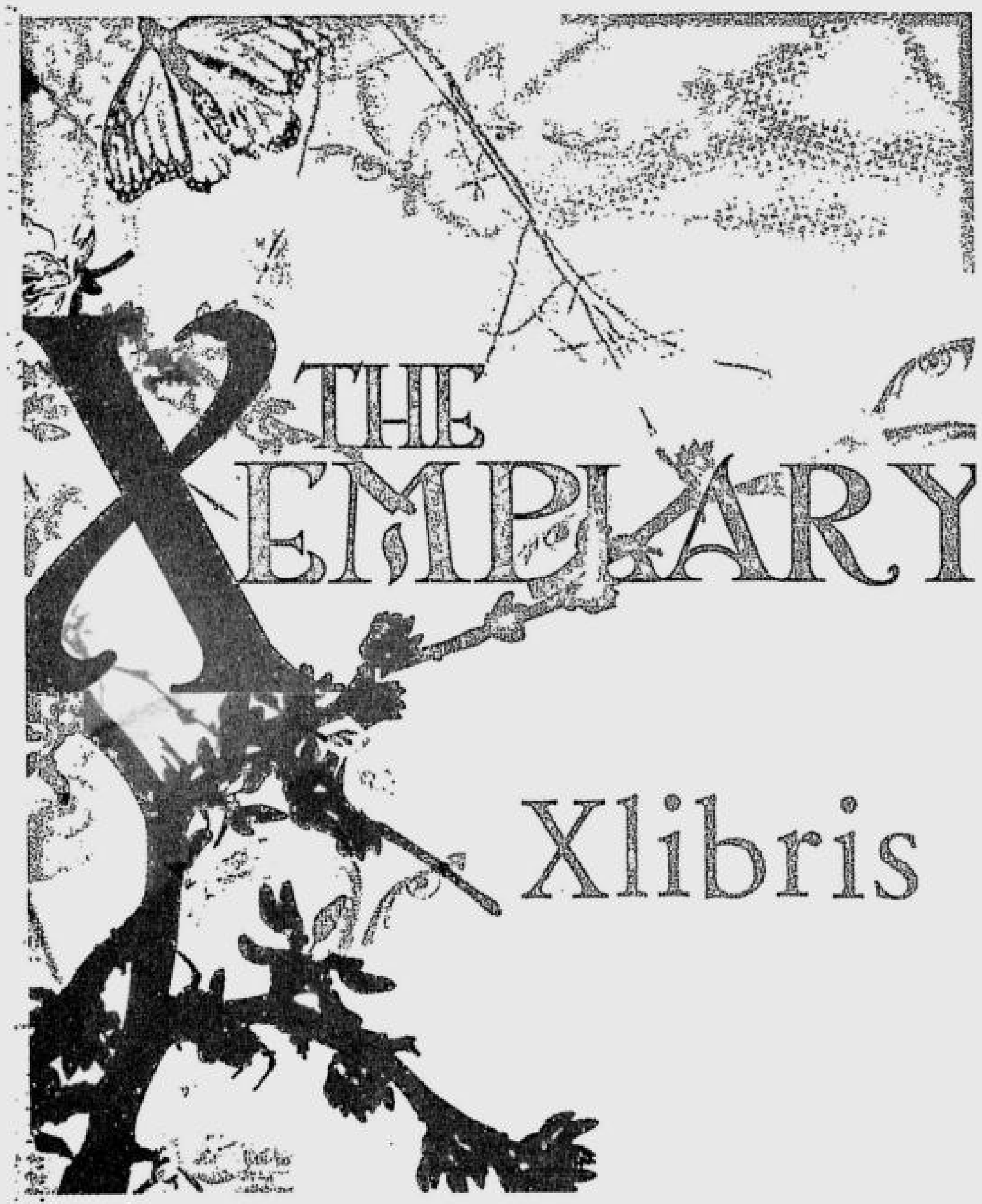
TRAVELBRIEFS

TOP OF CEBU

The Marco Polo Plaza Cebu holds an array of activities to welcome the New Year. Enjoy pop music at the Al Fresco and Garden Terrace, Big Band Dance at the Grand Ballroom, and Classics at the Lobby. End the year with a dazzling fireworks display seen from the top of the Marco Polo Plaza, the highest spot in town, 600 feet above sea level. You can stay at Marco Polo Plaza Cebu for P2,007 net per person, all-inclusive. Call (032)2531111 in Cebu or 8888168 in Manila; visit www.marcopolohotels.com.

Joint venture firm will develop Singapore's Sentosa

Infinity@The Bay Pte Ltd, joint venture company between Genting International and Star Cruises, will develop Singapore's second Integrated Resort Sentosa. The Singapore Government's Tender Approving Authority chose the joint venture company from three bidders. Infinity@The Bay Pte Ltd.'s proposal, Resorts World at Sentosa, is expected to strengthen Singapore's overall appeal to visitors. Genting committed to a development investment of S$3.85 billion. Together with the land price and other associated capital costs, Genting's total investment is S$5.2 billion. Universal Studios will have its largest theme park in Asia at Resorts World at Sentosa, offering 22 attractions within seven themed worlds, of which 16 will be specially designed for Singapore. Key highlights include the all-new "Journey to Madagascar" attraction and the Dreamworks Digital Animation Studios. Resorts World at Sentosa will also offer other family entertainment experiences such as Quest Marine Life Park operated by Dolphin Quest, Equarius Water Park and a Maritime Xperiential Museum. There will also be entertainment along the retail, dining and entertainment precinct of FestiveWalk, three public amphitheatres that will feature the Crane Ballet, as well as ESPA, a spa resort. Resorts World at Sentosa will have a resident show, "Le Vie," a production by members of the same creative team behind the Cirque du Soleil blockbusters like "KA" and "O" in Las Vegas. The resort will have six hotels offering 1,830 rooms including Hotel Michael by award-winning architect Michael Graves. Genting is expected to generate about $2.7 billion, about 0.8 percent, of Singapore's annual gross domestic product and create some 30,000 jobs throughout the economy by 2015.



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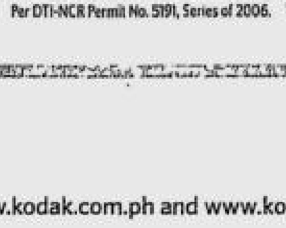

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'Without the priest, there's no Eucharist'

WHEN TUGUEGARAO ARCHbishop Diosdado Talamayan celebrated recently his Golden Jubilee as a priest at the Manila Pen ballroom, he reminded those present that "without the priest, there is no Eucharist." He exhorted fellow priests to remain holy and steadfast in spreading the Good News to God's people.

Concelebrating with Archbishop Talamayan were 13 bishops, including Papal Nuncio Fernando Filoni, and 24 priests. An altar was set up in the ballroom with the pilgrim image of Our Lady of Piat, patroness of Cagayan Valley.

When Archbishop Talamayan was ordained in 1956, with Archbishop Pedro Dean and 75 others, he offered his priesthood to Our Lady of Piat.

He said he would still choose to be a priest, if he were born again.

Archbishop Dean, in his homily said, "Priesthood is all the work of God and of the Church. We must clearly mirror Christ and project Him to His people. Whoever and whatever a priest is, (he) is a priest forever."

Archbishop Talamayan has been a bishop for 22 years and archbishop of Tuguegarao for 20 years. He retires Oct. 19, 2007 when he turns 75.

Through the document Christus Dominus, the Vatican asks bishops who are 75 years old to resign.

Archbishop Talamayan is grateful for having been able to shepherd a million souls through many co-workers. He put up seven parishes and the magnificent Basilica of Our Lady of Piat with the help of benefactors like Imelda Marcos and Cristina Ponce Enrile.

Archbishop Talamayan of Tuguegarao says he will still want to be a priest, if he is born again

The Pen ballroom was filled with friends, nuns and members of religious organizations, particularly the Devotees of Nuestra Señora de Piat Foundation led by Gen. Edgar Aglipay and the Cofradia dela Inmaculada Concepcion headed by Imelda Cojuangco and Aurora Eizmendi.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo attended the event.

Guests were humbled by the commitment of Archbishop Talamayan to serve God's people. His fellow clergymen also want to remain priests forever.

The archbishop and Fr. Fredel Agatep, chair of the Golden Jubilee celebration, would like to thank friends and benefactors for making the affair possible.

OFFICERS and members of the Cofradia de la Inmaculada Concepcion with Archbishop Diosdado Talamayan (with mitre). Seated: Criselda Lontok, Danny Dolor, Aurora Eizmendi, Allan Tengco, Fr. Jay Lina and Evelyn del Rosario. Standing: Josie Darang, Boysie Villavicencio, Lulu Castañeda, Nenuca Blardony, Myrna Borromeo and Fr. Johann Sebastian

Rosaries

Josephine Zozobrado Simporios has been making rosaries for inmates of the Cebu provincial jail. What makes the rosaries special is that she prays for the recipients.

Her brother Bob Zozobrado told me that Jojo (as she is fondly called) quit her lucrative job as VP-finance of a big shipping firm to devote her time to her prayer community, Bukas Loob sa Diyos.

Her husband, Dr. Alan Simporios, gives her total support. A kidney and vascular surgeon in Cebu, Dr. Alan is a servant leader of Bukas Loob sa Diyos, like his wife.

Jojo finishes about two rosaries a day. She does not sell them as she has chosen to bring people closer to the Blessed Mother and Our Lord through the rosary.

'Simbang Gabi'

Kamay ni Hesus Healing Church in Brgy. Tinamaan, Lucban, Quezon has been airing its "Simbang Gabi" at 4:30 and 5:30 a.m. on RPN Channel 9. Fr. Joey Faller, founder and spiritual director, and his co-worker, Fr. Angelo Jaballa, lead the Eucharistic rites.

Lucena Bishop Emilio Z. Marquez will lead the culminating ceremony on Christmas Day. The main focus of prayers is the healing of the nation that is currently beset with political enmity, social ills and natural disasters.

Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Philippines Gaming Corp.—Casino Filipino, Government Service Insurance System, Department of Tourism, SM-Mall of Asia made possible the broadcast of the Masses.

Scent of roses

When we attended recently the Mass celebrating the first anniversary of Fr. Lorenzo Marzo as a priest, we smelled roses near the altar. The statue of Our Lady of Piat was right in front of me, so I could not be mistaken.

Much later, Fr. Renz told me he smelled the roses, too. How he was able to get a beautiful image was a miracle. Out of the blue. A devotee offered one.

At 6 p.m. every Saturday, Fr. Renz holds a Novena Mass for Our Lady of Piat in the formation house of the Eucharistic Healers of Mary, 43 Morning Star Drive, Sanville Village, Culiat, QC.

Eleven seminarians and a deacon, Rev. Jing Desuyo, stay there. Four are studying theology, while the others are taking up philosophy. Most of the seminarians are poor and need benefactors. Those who want to help can text Fr. Renz at 0918-7171017.

Book

For those who have been looking for the book "Yena Tam Ngamin (Mother of Us All)," you can get a copy by sending a text message to author Bobby Caballero at 0918-8912825. Bobby, who spent a year researching, photographing Cagayan with Francis Rivera and interviewing devotees, said the experience made him a more spiritual person.

"The miraculous intercession of the Virgin is overwhelming," he said. "I can feel her helping me, protecting me."

I have read the book and was overwhelmed. The cover of my book is Our Lady of Piat. I am surprised that of all her titles, she let me use Our Lady of Piat.

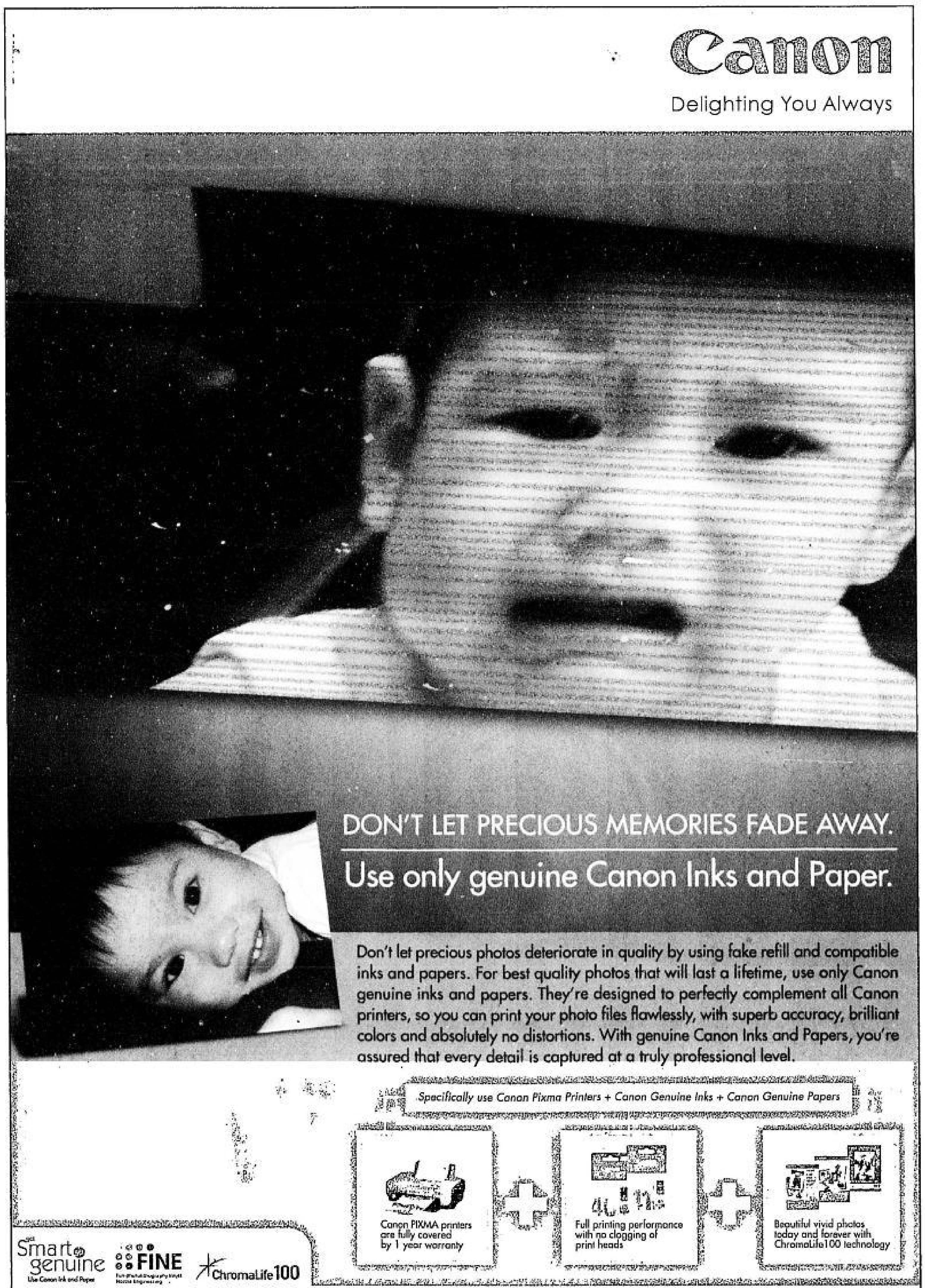
I suggest that everyone should read "Yena Tam Ngamin." It would make a perfect gift to yourself and to a friend.

Kind

Some residents of BF Parañaque made Fr. Dan Arnante of St. Anthony de Padua Parish in Presentacion, Camarines Sur and the St. Francis Choir very happy by inviting them to sing Christmas carols. Fr. Dan is raising money for the roof of his church that was blown away by "Reming." To help, text Fr. Dan at 0920-4637590.

Christmas Mass

The God Loves Catholic Prayer Community will have a Christmas Day Mass at 9 a.m. tomorrow at No. 84-A 10th St., New Manila, QC.



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EMILY'S POST
Emily A. Marcelo

Married 8 years, together only one

Dear Emily,

I am a mother of two and my husband is working abroad. He has been away for almost 10 years and, under his contract, can come home only every two years.

I've been feeling so empty. I wish my husband is by my side. I want him to come home already but he just doesn't understand this.

He ignores me when I talk to him and I feel that he isn't interested in me anymore.

We've been married for almost eight years now but we lived together for only one year. I have plans, too, of going abroad to work because my children are growing up and the money my husband sends is not enough to support us.

My husband is also having an affair, which depresses me very much. I do not know what to do and I am very confused.

CLARIS

Is your stomach strong enough to accept the truth without getting sick?

You're human and it's totally appropriate that you demand comfort from someone who promised he would—at the altar.

You are completely forgiven for feeling down and out. But you and your husband have been together, in truth, only a year!

Unless you were just planting an herb garden, which would only take a few weeks to grow and mature, this marriage hadn't even grown strong roots to withstand the agony and loneliness of long separations. The additional seven years of marriage is just air.

Now, what to do, what to do? From the looks of it, it seems you'll have to row your boat alone and really fend for yourself.

Muster all your strength to find ways of going through this life by yourself until such time that your husband regains his sense of family and takes care of you—emotionally—again.

Dig deep into your mind and unleash the creativity that may be locked up in you. Find ways of ending your dependence on your husband.

There's nothing more unattractive than a clinging woman who is healthy and strong. You might even attract your husband again if you prove to him what an independent and resourceful wife you are, barely needing anything from him.

The point is, you're not sick or disabled and can actually take by the horn this life fate has served you and prove to one and all your strength and maturity.

Who cares if he's not interested in you anymore? Is he interesting himself?

You both made your bed and must lay in it. You wanted security for your family and had to pay the ultimate price to achieve it—your loveless marriage.

It's not a joke when they say marriage has to be nurtured. You cannot just go into it and not do anything about it. It has to be taken cared of. You have to love being in it body and soul.

Your husband just gave you his name in marriage and his seed every two years to enlarge your family. Period. The money he remits to you doesn't a marriage make.

It is the day-to-day routine, the waking up, the laughter, the hurts, the screaming and making-up, the hugs, the anguish of a child's sickness—those and more encompass marriage.

You two have possibly become as impersonal with each other as a bank teller and a client. One year of marriage and his occasional visits are not strong enough to make him loyal or hold him to his relationship with you. Uh, uh—too weak!

Talk to him the best way you could and iron out the mess of this non-marriage. You owe it to yourself!

E-mail the author at emarcelo@inquirer.com.ph, Subject: Lifestyle, or send your letters to INQUIRER. Listen to Ms Marcelo co-host the program "Kalikasan Vigilante," 7:15-8:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, on dwBR 104.3 FM.

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GARY Valenciano and his wife Angeli turn over a check donation of P200,000 to Dr. Nicholas Apuli, Unicef country representative, during the Manila celebration of the UN agency's recent 60th anniversary.

'Blessings in Disguise'

By Marinel R. Cruz

MULTI-AWARDED ARTIST and avowed Christian Gary Valenciano admits he had "extreme difficulty" dealing with the fact that he was an unwed father early on in his singing career.

In 1984, Gary got his then girlfriend, Angeli Pangilinan, pregnant with their first son, Paolo. The couple tied the knot in August 1985. They now have three kids.

Gary recalls: "As my career [took] flight, so did my feelings for Angeli. We were in love, and before we knew it, Angeli was pregnant… my career was on the line," the singer shares in an essay titled "An Unlikely Couple."

The essay is among several stories featured in the inspirational book "Blessings in Disguise"—a collection of personal accounts of "miracles disguised as unfortunate circumstances" experienced by noted personalities in entertainment, business, government and the arts.

The singer continues: "There was more than just [my] career that concerned us both deeply. (Angeli's sister) Felichi, whom I dated for a while, was very much hurt. [Angeli and I] both had to take the steps to repair the damage and rebuild the relationship that we had broken."

FLOR Tarriela and Butch Jimenez

More than a hundred stories on coping with heartache, loss, failure and disappointment are featured in "Blessings in Disguise." Dramatic actress Princess Punzalan-Field, in "My Search for a Father," shares how she rekindled her relationship with her father, the late broadcast journalist Orly Punzalan, who reappeared after 13 years of absence. Multi-awarded singer Dulce ("Educated by the Best Reacher") tells of how she needed to stop schooling at a young age due to poverty. Actress Iza Calzado ("Lost and Found") recalls how her mother's death pushed her toward a career in show biz.

"Blessings in Disguise" is the third volume of the "Coincidence or Miracle?" series compiled by Butch Jimenez and Flor Gozon Tarriela. The book also features stories of show biz personalities Donita Rose, Champagne Morales and Ayen Munji-Laurel; National Artist for Literature Alejandro Roces, artists Raul Isidro and Jose Blanco; business leaders Felipe Gozon of GMA 7, Butch Bonoan of Better Than Ice Cream, environmentalist Odette Alcantara; as well as Sonya Garcia of Sonya's Secret Garden and Carolina "Kay" Jimenez of Bamboo Garden.

Tarriela, who wrote the essay "Hopeless Cook," is chair of the Philippine National Bank (PNB) and former undersecretary of finance. She holds the distinction of being the first lady vice president of Citibank. Jimenez ("Every Loss is a Stepping Stone") is currently the president of the TOYM (Ten Outstanding Young Men) Foundation and senior vice president of the Retail Business Group of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

"Blessings in Disguise" is now available at Powerbooks, Philippine Bible Society outlets in UN Sta. Mesa and Cebu, Sonya's Garden in Tagaytay and all OMF outlets.

METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL

(INQUIRER Entertainment is running this MMFF guide to help moviegoers plan their holiday cinema tour. The festival runs from tomorrow until Jan. 7, 2007.)

Matakot Ka sa Karma

Stars Gretchen Barretto, Rica Peralejo, Angelica Panganiban, Tanya Garcia, Bianca King, Rafael Rosel, Liza Lorena, Ana Capri

Directed by Jose Javier Reyes

This horror trilogy weaves in and out of an antique store that sells furniture pieces—a bed, cabinet and vanity—haunted by malevolent spirits. An OFW's wife fights with an overly maternal ghost for her son's soul; a young couple is harassed by the spirit of a deformed boy; a beautiful woman is stalked by an evil presence. This is the fourth filmfest thriller from the tandem of Canary, Reyes and Peralejo—after "Malikmata," "Spirit of the Glass" and "Kutob." This year, the filmmaker adds two lovely damsels in the equation: Barretto and Panganiban. "It was a pleasure working with these three ladies," Reyes says. "We followed a color scheme for the look of each episode: white, gray and black."

Mano Po 5: Gua Ai Di

Stars Lorna Tolentino, Richard Gutierrez, Angel Locsin, Tirso Cruz III, Gina Alajar, Boots Anson-Roa, Jaclyn Jose, Christian Bautista

Directed by Joel Lamangan

This romantic comedy continues the "Mano Po" tradition, but at the same time offers something new, according to Regal executive producer Lily Monteverde. "If previous 'Mano Po' movies focused on Chinoys, this latest installment features the marriage of Chinese and Filipino cultures." A pure Chinese girl falls for a Pinoy despite the protests of her conservative clan. Complicating matters is her childhood sweetheart, an Asian singing idol—portrayed by Bautista who makes his big-screen debut. "Direk Joel knew exactly how to motivate me," he recounts. Tolentino says she had to shift from Fookien to broken Tagalog in playing Yolanda, Locsin's manic mom. Was she inspired by Mother Lily? "No, Mother is more hyper!"

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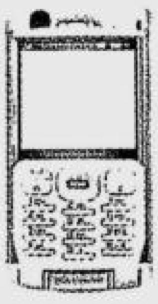

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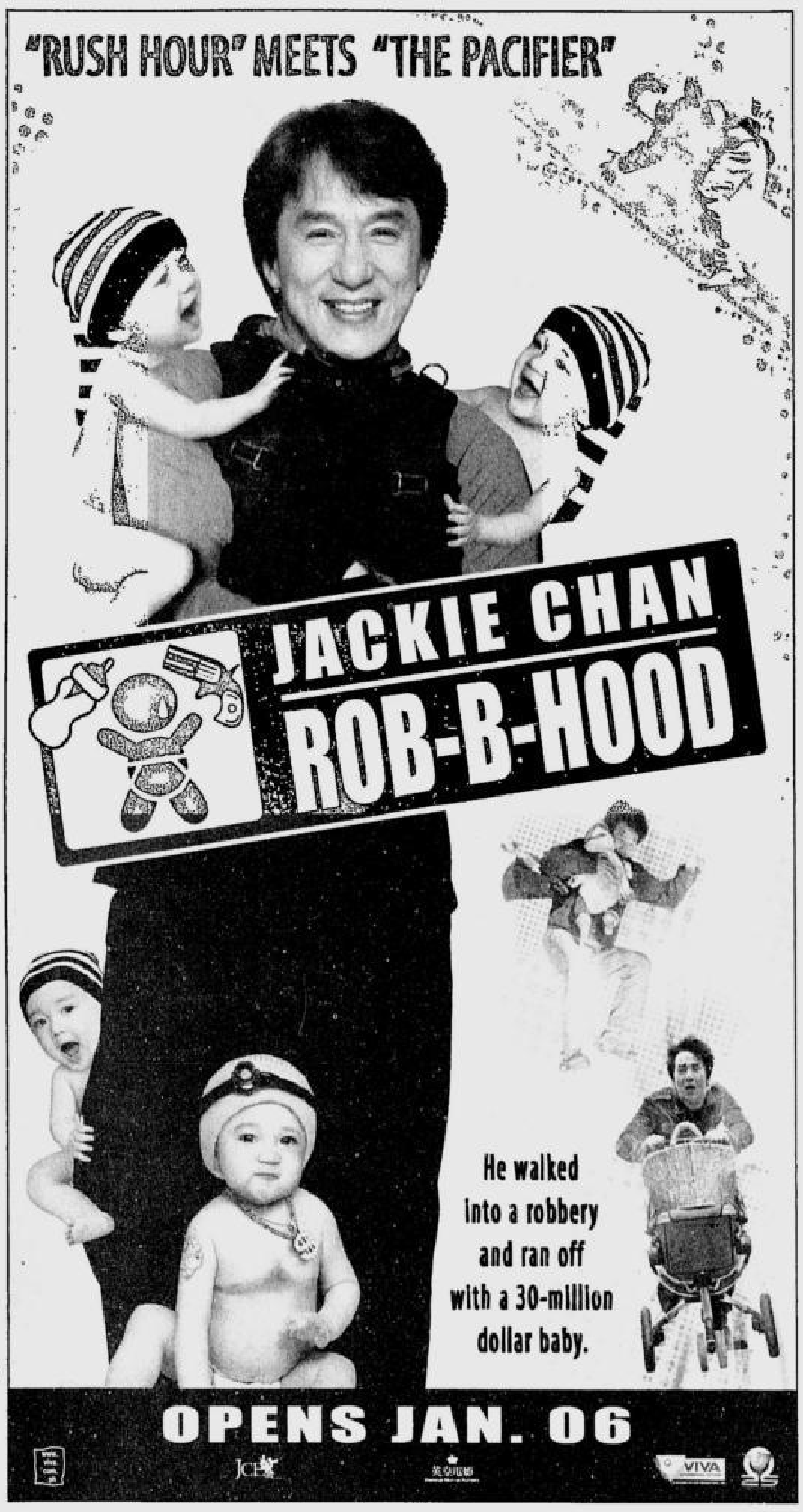
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OPENS JAN. 06

DID YOU KNOW...

Critics pick 'The Departed'

KNOXVILLE, Tennessee—"The Departed" and its director, Martin Scorsese, won top honors from the Southeastern Film Critics Association.

The movie, about two undercover agents in Boston's police department and Irish organized mob, was also cited for Best Adapted Screenplay.

The Best Actor award went to Forest Whitaker as Ugandan dictator Idi Amin in "The Last King of Scotland," and the Best Actress, to Helen Mirren, Elizabeth II in "The Queen."

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G4 GLORIETTA 4	LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE	TENACIOUS D	THX CASINO ROYALE GUARANTEED SEATS	ALL THE KING'S MEN	A GOOD YEAR	HAPPY FEET	THE NATIVITY
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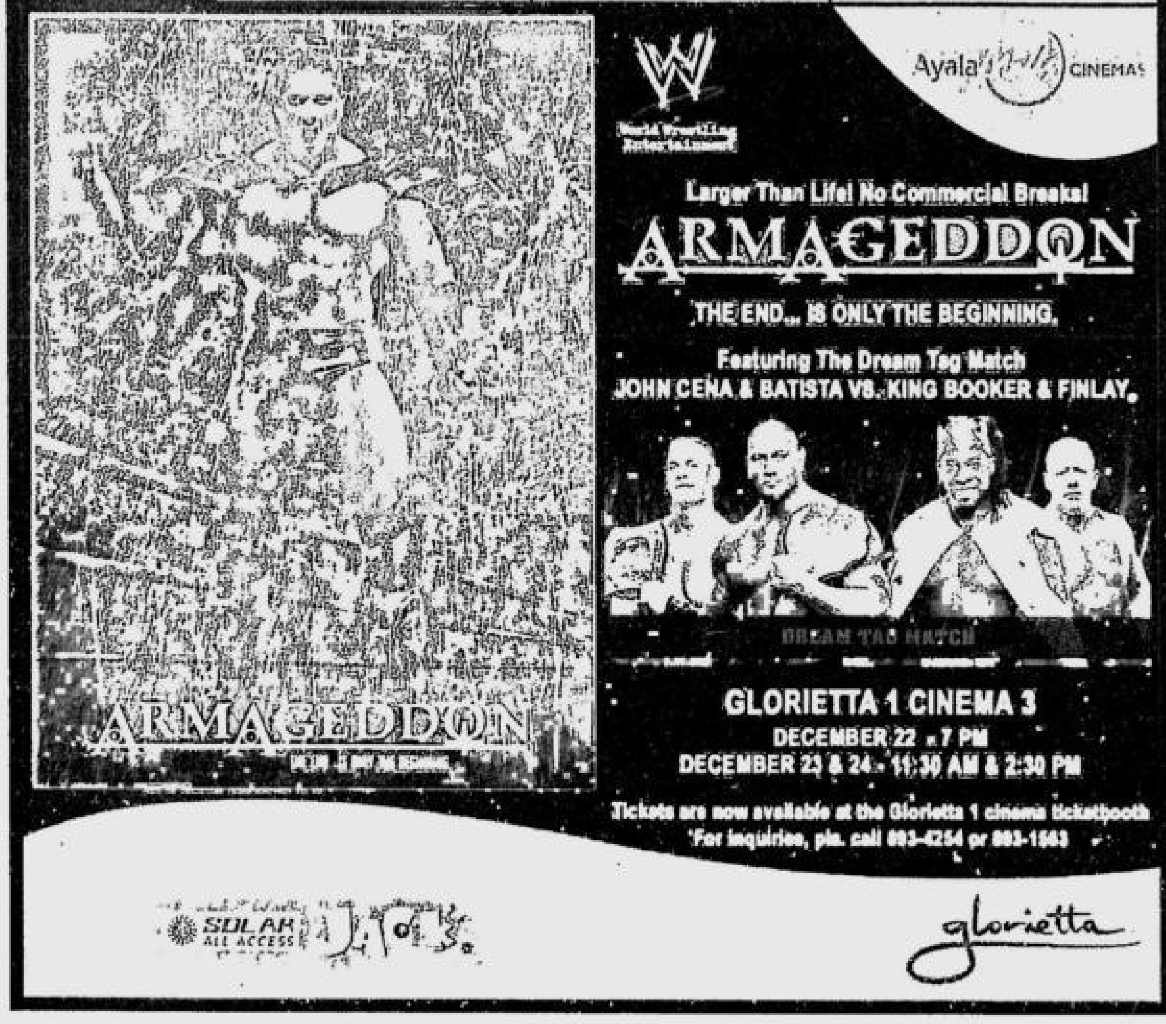
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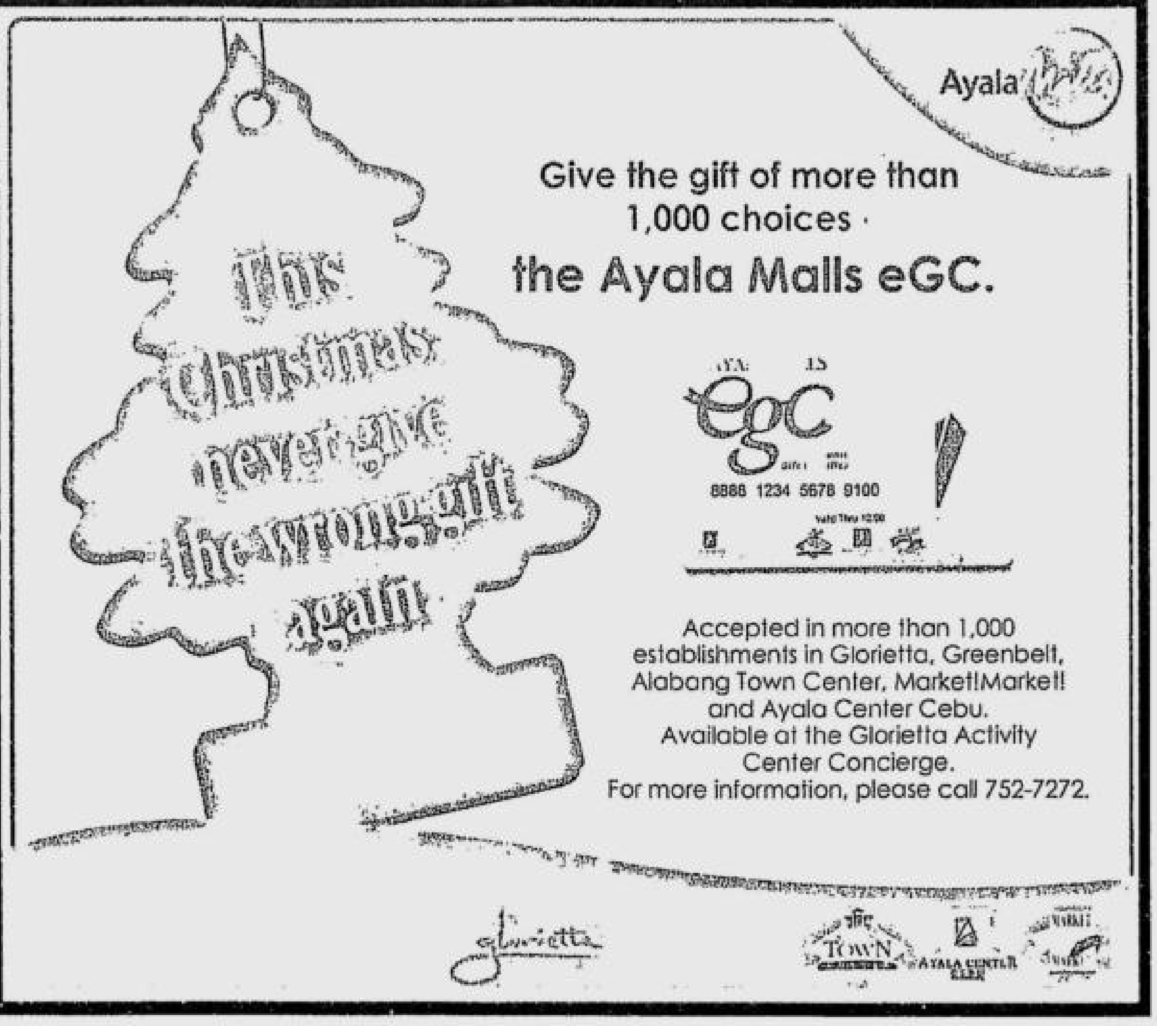
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Angelina Jolie opens up for the first time

From page E6

herd," I had to go quite WASP-y whereas I am more ethnic looking. It's easier for me to go darker than lighter and my character was quite light. (On the second question), I have gotten used to myself, my face. I don't think of myself one way or another—kind of beautiful or ugly. I look like my mom and so that's nice to me (laughing).

In portraying a woman, wife and mother from the 1930s and 1940s, what are some of the differences from your own experience living today?

Many things. It wasn't just the 30s and through. On top of it, she's married to the CIA. She's unable to express her independence. That was probably the hardest thing. She could not even have an improvised fight. How far could I (her character) take an aggressive attack or an insult? I always had to stay in my place and there wasn't anywhere to go.

It was not possible (for my character) to say, "I'm leaving," "I want a divorce," "I want this" or "I want this for my child." It was very claustrophobic in that marriage. It was very hard for me as an actress to do that, to make myself less opinionated, powerful and strong. On a funnier note, I was sent to manners classes—for lessons on how to hold a cup of tea, to cross my legs the right way and to tilt my head a little and listen. It was funny that the natural way we hold ourselves today as women is not as gracious and elegant as the women of that time.

That element of the film was lost on my character who was just drinking and ignoring it. But in my life, that element is there, even when it's just going out with the kids or where I go. Or plans for the holidays or even trying to figure out anything really. When I was pregnant and I just wanted to go to my doctor's appointments, I had to try to find some way to get there without people following me. All that felt very uncomfortable, to be honest. But it's just a part of this business.

What do you think is the message of this film?

To be honest, I've not seen the film yet so I don't know which pieces were taken out or put in and how exactly it was told. I know that Bob's intention was—and he probably says it better—not to give a specific, this-is-what-you-should-be-questioning element or feeling. Bob's aim was to show people and situations. It's up to the moviegoers to read into them.

My personal feeling on the political nature of the film is, it is always important to question your government and what it is doing, not just blindly trusting that it's going to make the right decisions, and if it's being moral or not. I think now is no exception. This is a time when we must be questioning, as we all are, the decisions of our current administration regarding foreign policy and so forth.

Will you and Brad do a sequel of "Mr. and Mrs. Smith" or perhaps another movie?

There was talk at one point about another one of those but it would just be too weird since it would be so much our life (laughter). It would be like a home documentary. They said, "No, we'll make another one and you'll have children" and we thought, "Oh, good" (laughter). We'd love to work together on something but it's tricky when you're a couple and the world knows it. The movie should be a comedy. It's easier for people who are in a relationship to have fun with each other, take shots at each other, than take each other seriously. Nothing has come across us yet, though.

With your career, family and UN work, how do you juggle all of them?

Brad says I'm obsessive with schedule (laughing). I'm very fortunate to have him in my life. He's a great father—really dedicated. We take turns working and we both love being with our kids. It's a decision we made so it's something we've wanted to do.

You must get exhausted from all your commitments.

I love everything that I do. I love to work for the UN and in film. I relax with Brad and my kids. We do get exhausted like normal parents but we love it. If we plan to have a very large family, we shouldn't stretch it out over the next 10 years or else we'll be raising kids forever. So we've thought about it. I am sure we won't wait forever to build our family.

So will you adopt again sooner than later?

I think so, yeah.

In "Alexander" and "The Good Shepherd," you played older women. How do you feel about aging?

I'm looking very much forward to growing older. I want to be an exhausted older woman but with a very full life behind me and one still going. As an actress, they tell you things like don't look this way or don't age. Somebody even gave me advice not to play older women. To me, it has always been about the story and the character. Clover, my character in "The Good Shepherd," was such an interesting woman. I loved the challenge of how she broke down and aged. Personally, I like to see age on faces.

E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com.

A PARTY scene. She was sent to "manners classes" for this movie.

FEEDBACK

From Roger Andulan (roger_andulan@hotmail.com) Guam:

It appears to me that the film "Ang Pamana" should be of great interest to all Filipinos abroad. About 25 percent of Guam's population consists of Pinoys. We look forward to seeing this film here.

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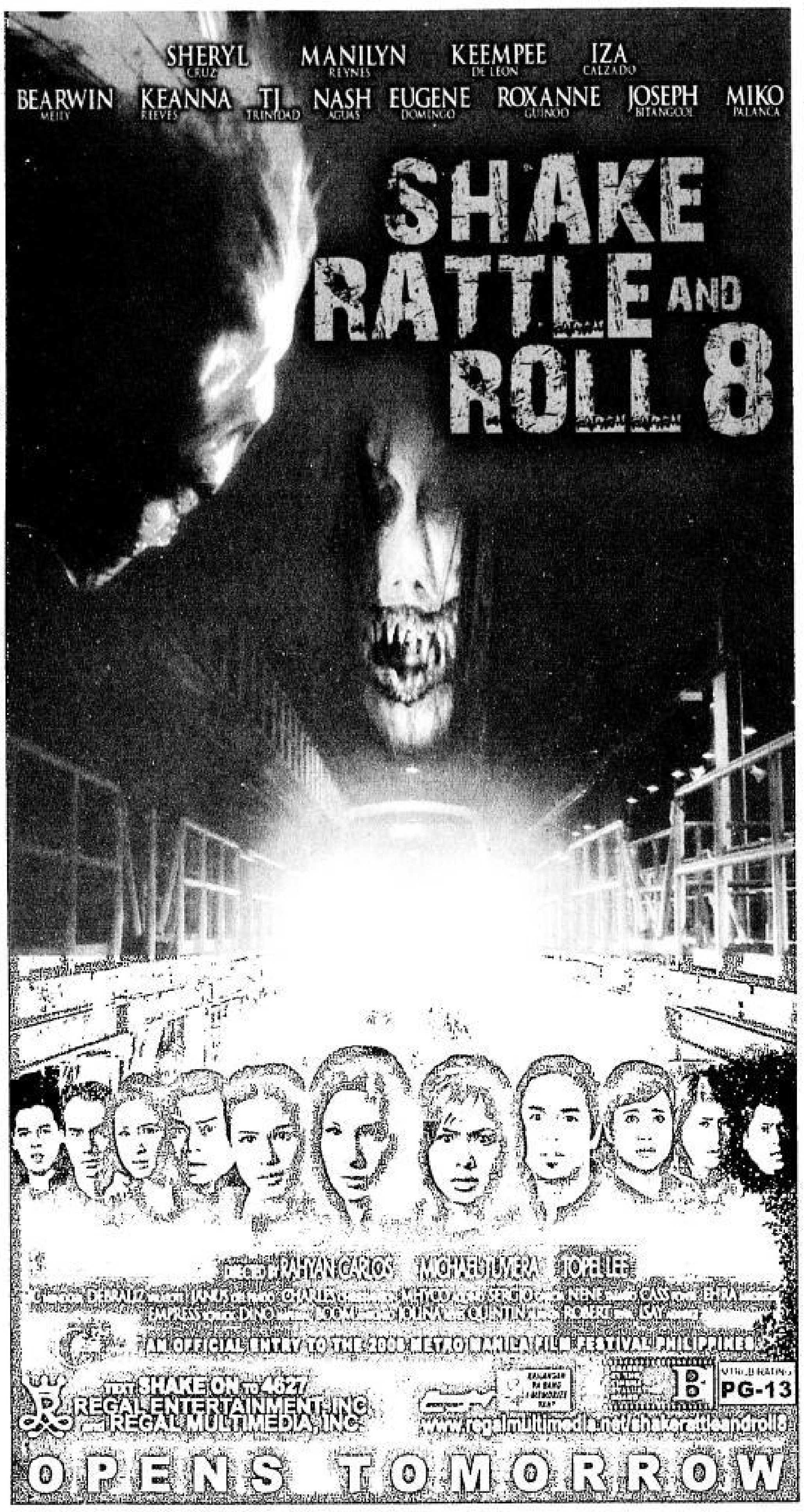

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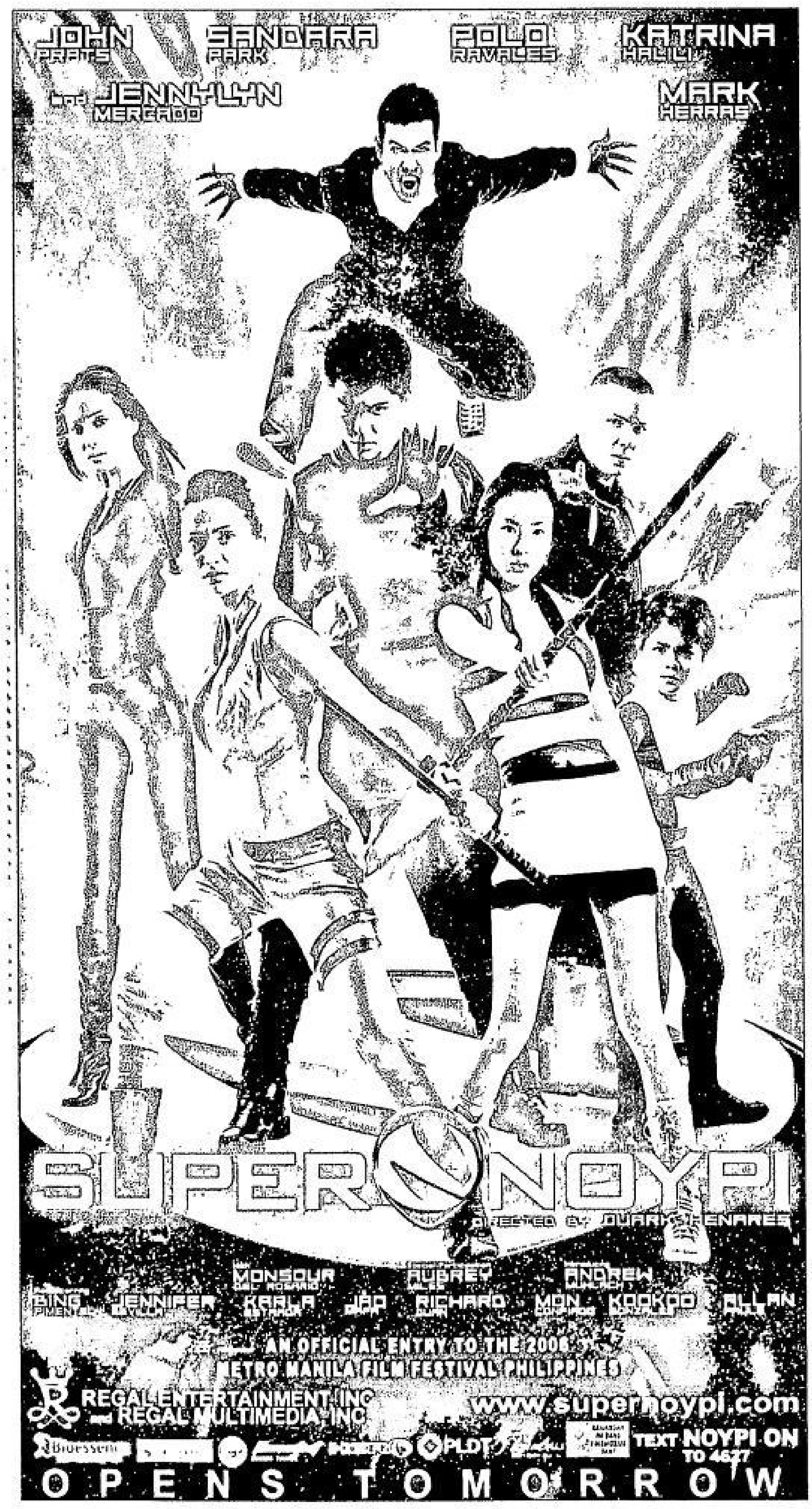

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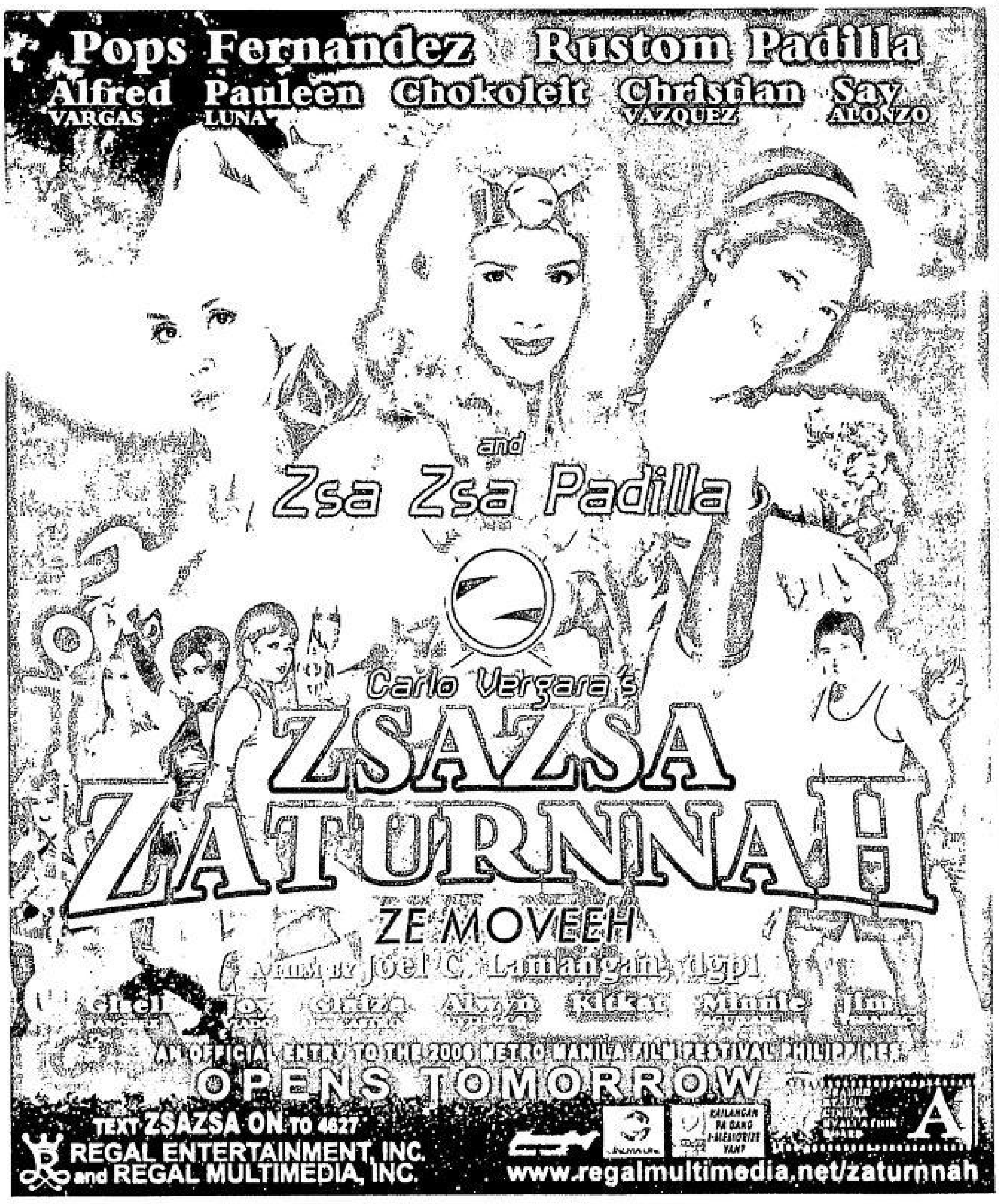

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A night at the opera can be fun

By Pocholo Concepcion
Contributor

REVIEW

HEARING THE PHILIPPINE NAtional anthem played by the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra feels like this is the best country in the world.

It's a good night for opera at the Philamlife Theater on UN Avenue, where impresario Pablo Tariman is presenting his year-ender concert of Christmas carols and a variety of arias with a tenor, two sopranos, a flutist and a pop diva—all incidentally world-class.

The opening number, Mozart's "Magic Flute Overture," yields more good vibrations. Conductor Rodel Colmenar is a youthful bundle of verve, diminutive in height but commanding strong attention with every nod or wave of his stick.

Tenor Otoniel Gonzaga walks in and does a majestic version of 'Joy to the World." Hearing this version for the first time is like, we imagine, being transported to the time of the Roman Empire, when the Messiah is born.

Gonzaga is dubbed by some quarters as "the greatest living Filipino tenor." Intimidating. But the way he smiles at the end of the song reveals an intimacy within easy reach.

Moved to tears

Rachel Gerodias, the first of two sopranos, follows with a sophisticated rendition of another Mozart piece, "Alleluia." It doesn't sound like the way it's sung in church—maybe in heaven itself. Gerodias looks regal, like a queen who's pure of heart and intentions.

Dulce, grand dame of versatile pop singing, who impressed Broadway's Cameron Mackintosh and Claude-Michel Schonberg, does a dramatic reading of "I Dreamed a Dream" from "Les Miserables." Wonder why she had to use a microphone? Her pipes could very well do without electronic aid.

In her "The Prayer" duet with Gonzaga, Dulce is moved to tears, which she sheds on the bosom of her singing partner.

Members of the orchestra stomp their feet in appreciation of flutist Christopher Oracion's performance in "La Traviata Concertwaltzer." They would do so after every difficult piece throughout the evening.

Camille Lopez-Molina, the other soprano, represents the typical, heavy-built opera singer whose delivery in Puccini's "Vissi d'arte" is not to be taken lightly.

The arias take on a more dramatic tone after the intermission.

In "Improviso" and "Vicino a te," Gonzaga explains the circumstances of the songs' desperate and tragic mood. Without this backgrounder, it would have been difficult to appreciate the numbers, given their Italian lyrics.

The other performers go through another round of solo numbers. In one instance, in Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Memory" from "Cats," Dulce goes all-out to a climactic finish that sends eardrums ringing.

The night ends on a rousing note as Gonzaga pulls off a particularly challenging interpretation of "Oh Holy Night," his left arm rising like an orator as he bellows on a breathtaking phrase.

We want to scream like a hysterical fan in a rock concert, except that all around me, people like Gilda Cordero-Fernando, Odette Alcantara, Nestor Mata and George Yang are already profuse in their applause and shouts of "Bravo! Bravo!"

A night at the opera can be fun, too.

ROUNDUP

Text promo

VIEWERS WHO STAY TUNED TO GMA 7'S "CAPTAIN BARBELL," "ATlantika," "Bakekang" and "A Rosy Life" every night until Dec. 29 may win P1 million in cash to be electronically drawn on SOP on Dec. 31.

Once the promo logo appears, viewers may text KAPUSO<space>Name of program where the logo appeared and send to 4627 for all networks.

Ten Media Noche feast winners will be drawn daily from Dec. 25-29.

'Left Behind III'

The world goes into pandemonium after millions of people vanish from the face of the earth. Supported by US President Gerald Fitzhugh (Lou Gossett Jr.), one man restores order.

Nicolae Carpathia (Gordon Currie), rumored to be the anti-Christ, gains control over the media and the military in a bid to increase his power.

"Left Behind III: World at War" premieres on Jan. 7, 9 p.m. on Cinemax.

And now, Barbie Duff

RUSHES

LOS ANGELES—HILARY DUFF is a real doll. A real Barbie doll.

Duff is the latest Hollywood star to take on 12-inch proportions as the world's most popular fashion doll. She joins other famous (doll) faces such as Reese Witherspoon, Beyonce Knowles and Lucille Ball.

The Red Carpet Glam Hilary Duff Doll, which shows the 19-year-old's likeness in a polka-dot dress with a red satin sash, hits stores this month.

Duff, a singer, actress and fashion designer best known for playing TV's "Lizzie McGuire," has also designed clothes for Barbie. *AP*

Grand Marshal Hicks

NEW ORLEANS—American Idol winner Taylor Hicks will reign as the Krewe of Endymion's grand marshal for the 2007 Carnival season.

The gray-haired, 30-year-old soul singer is from Birmingham, Alabama.

Singer Al Green and the musical groups Journey and Styx will also ride in the parade.

Hicks was in New Orleans for a wedding just before Hurricane Katrina struck on Aug. 29, 2005. With his flight out of town canceled, he took a cab to West Monroe and turned his free plane ticket into an Idol audition trip to Las Vegas.

Endymion is among the city's largest Carnival groups. It will roll down historic St. Charles Avenue on Feb. 17, the Saturday before Mardi Gras, which is Feb. 20. *AP*

All for the money

NEW YORK—Naomi Watts, who's tackled emotionally wrenching roles, has a love-hate relationship with the idea of starring in a romantic comedy.

"I look at those romantic comedies, and I see actors with perfect hair and six-packs, and I feel myself being numbed, and I get angry because I see so much money spent on these things," the 38-year-old actress says in an interview in Allure magazine's January issue, on newsstand Tuesday.

"I don't mean to sound righteous here," she continues. "There is need for it, because there are times when I am in a hotel room and need to be numbed. I keep saying to myself, Oh, God, I'm sick of playing these dark, harrowing roles. I want a big paycheck, so put me in some dumb romantic comedy any day." *AP*

NAOMI WATTS

Fire on Oahu

HONOLULU—Fire destroyed the rented home of "Lost" star Evangeline Lilly in coastal Kailua on Oahu island, officials said. Lilly was not at home, and no one was injured.

Two roommates were also not home when the fire broke out sometime after 6:30 a.m. Wednesday, authorities said. *AP*

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Angelina Jolie opens up for the first time

From page E7

ian passport. She has that connection to another country and to her sister's part of the world. I think that ties them together a little.

'It's better to be single if you're with the wrong person'

It must be easier now to have somebody around to help with the kids.

It's easier to be with somebody. But it's better to be single if you're with the wrong person (laughter). There were so many times with Mad when he was growing up that I'd be up in the middle of the night, exhausted, rocking him. Nobody was there—except for friends—who saw me exhausted, who appreciated my efforts. Nobody was there whom I could look at or explode in excitement with when Mad said his first word. That was a bit sad. It made me very close to Mad but there's the joy now of waking up in the middle of the night, like last night, and looking at the other exhausted parent, sharing the burden and learning, smiling about a child's new tooth and just enjoying children. As a woman, having a partner who appreciates you as a mom, who remembers your history with your children is special.

Even though I had Maddox, I didn't have a family somehow. I have a very small family myself. Brad has a wonderful way—he really does invest in our daily life together. He makes the most of every single moment whereas I tend to move very quickly through things. So he slowed me down to really enjoy this time. That's probably the greatest gift and what I love about him. I think I expected a lot of things when I met him. I didn't know anything about him as a man except what you all write (laughing). I found a really kind, funny, down-to-earth man. Just a wonderful man that you usually expect in a different package. He is who he is in the world but at home he is a really wonderful friend and father.

Can you talk some more about how Brad has taught you to slow down and enjoy life?

If I want to go on some trip because I want to have an adventure, explore and learn something, he'll make sure that we have enough days to just be with our kids or we do something special with the family. He reminds me that it's OK to take a deep breath, sit down, enjoy life, not race through it and let it go past you. He's been very good for me in that aspect.

After the controversy of Madonna adopting a child, the cynical reaction from media was that some celebrities are "buying" babies. Did that hurt the chances of some babies being adopted?

I hope not. I hope people are smart enough to understand that it was a very specific situation of a country that didn't have foreign adoption (policy). So it's a very specific legal situation. I hope everybody wishes the best for that little boy and his new life. Again, it's the negative and positive media. It's good for media to question whether there's something at play that you need to understand or may not be right. Then there are people who decide to run stories in the most negative way possible just to sell magazines.

I was working in India and I didn't go out of my way to study everything about it (Madonna's adoption of a boy issue). I don't know a lot about that country (Malawi). I have not been there. I have gotten lists of counties to adopt from and that country has never been on those lists. I believe that anybody who adopts a child has that commitment to that child for the rest of his life. There's got to be some love in that situation. I don't think it's fair to just look at it in a negative way. We have to hope that's the best for that little boy.

You grew up in a show business environment. Do you think your children will follow the same path?

Strangely enough, because I didn't live with my father (actor John Voight), I didn't go to a bunch of film sets and things like that. But I did grow up in Hollywood and somewhat around that. What I am trying to give to my children—and it's the one thing I didn't have—is at least half a year, if not more, in a foreign country. On occasion, they've been on film sets. They're around this stuff every once in a while but they really spend the majority of their lives not around this (Hollywood). I am trying to give them balance, like with Mad, he came to work with me in India and he played with the local kids. He hung out at the local places and he didn't live a Hollywood life during that time.

It was the same case when we were in Africa. I am glad I can bring Mad to these foreign countries and he's not looking for a Nintendo and a hotel room. He's happy to go to some neighbor's house that's very modest and just play outside with rocks. So I hope with that balance, I'll instill in the children something that's more than just wanting to be in this business. But if they want to, God help us, we will let them (laughter).

Where is home for you?

We don't actually know. We have a lot of our stuff in Los Angeles but we're looking for a home outside of that. We just went back to Cambodia which I consider home.

How was your experience working with Robert De Niro as director?

On the set, Bob was so great to work with. When I first met him, somebody said to me, "Look, he doesn't like to talk a lot. He'll probably talk to you for five minutes." We talked for almost two hours because we ended up talking about world affairs. He's not a casual person.

Please comment on—first, how you look different in this movie because of your blonde hair. And second, how everybody talks about your beauty.

(On the first question), that certainly makes me feel good. I have always seen myself as different looking. In "The Good Shep-

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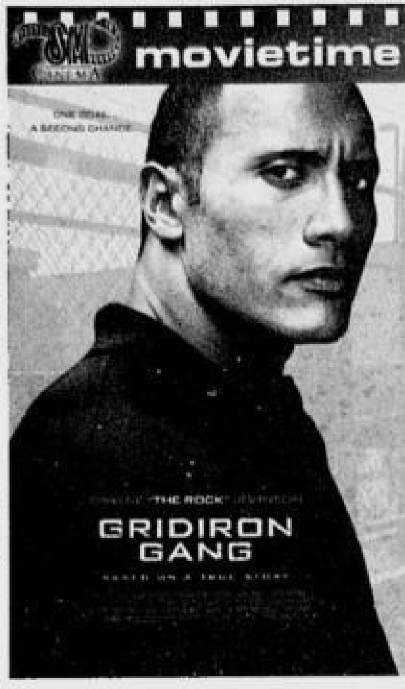
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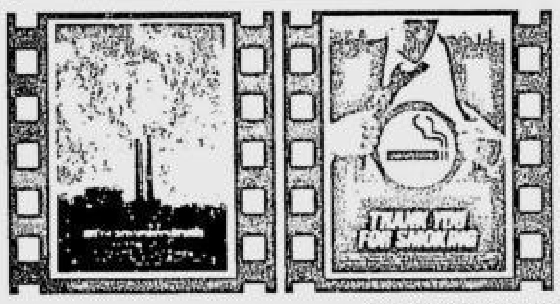

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7 WAG KANG LILINGON
8 HAPPY FEET
9 REYNA

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 SUKOB
3 X-MEN 3
4 M.I:III

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 GRIDIRON GANG
2 CASINO ROYALE
3 THE RETURN
4 BEST MOVIES OF 2006
5 HAPPY FEET
6 THE NATIVITY
7 SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD
8 SPIRIT TRAP
9 WAG KANG LILINGON
10 REYNA
11 TENACIOUS D
12 FRAGILE

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 HAPPY FEET
2 THE RETURN
3 MEE-SHEE
4 FEAST

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 THE RETURN
3 SANTA CALUSE 3
4 FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 M.I:III
3 X-MEN 3
4 SUKOB

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1 SUKOB 11:00 - 12:40
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS 12:50 - 3:25
3 X-MEN 3 3:35 - 5:20
4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 5:30 - 7:35

LUZON

SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868
1 TENACIOUS D
2 HAPPY FEET
3 BEST MOVIES OF 2006
4 SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD
5 CASINO ROYALE
6 WAG KANG LILINGON
7 DECK THE HALLS
8 REYNA

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 HAPPY FEET
2 BEST MOVIES OF 2006
3 THE MARINE
4 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS
5 WAG KANG LILINGON
6 FRAGILE

SM CITY MARILAO (044)0332013-17
1 HAPPY FEET
2 WAG KANG LILINGON
3 THE RETURN
4 SANTA CLAUSE 3

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 M.I:III
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 X-MEN 3
4 SUKOB

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 SUKOB
2 CASINO ROYALE
3 THE MARINE
4 INANG YAYA
5 MEE-SHEE
6 BEST MOVIES OF 2006

SM CIY LIPA (043) 756-7925
1 STEP UP
2 HAPPY FEET
3 THE RETURN
4 MEE-SHEE

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 THE MARINE
2 ANG PAMANA
3 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS
4 FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 SANTA CLAUISE 3
2 BOA
3 HAPPY FEET
4 MEE-SHEE

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 BEST MOVIES OF 2006
2 ANG PAMANA
3 BARNYARD
4 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5341265-66
1 SANTA CLAUSE 3
2 BEST MOVIES OF 2006
3 HAPPY FEET
4 FEAST

VISAYAS MINDANAO

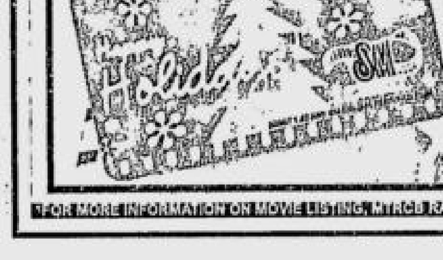
SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 THE NATIVITY
2 CASINO ROYALE
3 BEST MOVIES OF 2006
4 THE MARINE
5 HAPPY FEET
6 FRAGILE
7 WAG KANG LILINGON
8 BOA

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 MEE-SHEE
2 BEST MOVIES OF 2006
3 HAPPY FEET
4 ZU WARRIORS
5 THE NATIVITY
6 CASINO ROYALE
7 RESERVED
8 FRAGILE

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 MEE-SHEE
2 CASINO ROYALE
3 FRAGILE
4 THE NATIVITY
5 FEAST
6 HAPPY FEET

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 ICE AGE 2
3 M.I:III
4 X-MEN 3

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE



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CASINO ROYALE 007 PG13 1:05,4:00	HAPPY FEET G 1:10,3:30,5:50	A GOOD YEAR PG13 2:30,5:00
TENACIOUS D IN: THE PICK OF DESTINY 1:50,4:00,6:10	SPIRIT TRAP R13 1:45,3:55 BORAT R18 6:00	THE NATIVITY STORY PG13 1:20,3:30,5:40

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SHANG CINEPLEX
① TENACIOUS D
MTRCB R-13
12.40, 3.00, 5.20
② THE NATIVITY
MTRCB GP
1.20, 3 30, 5 40
③ HAPPY FEET
MTRCB GP
2.30, 5.00
④ CASINO ROYALE
MTRCB PG 13 1 25
A GOOD YEAR
MTRCB PG-13 4 30
PREMIERE THEATRE
THE PRODUCERS / RENT
MTRCB PG-13 12 45, 6 15
MTRCB R-13 3 30
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CINEMA 4 TENACIOUS D 11:20 , 1:35 , 3:50 6:05 R-13
CINEMA 5 HAPPY FEET 11:00 , 1:15 , 3:35 5:55 GP
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MUSIC MUSEUM

DEC. 27 , 2006	" Kyla " Give Love On Christmas Day	8:00 PM
DEC. 28 , 2006	Truefaith , Mojofly , Guji Florenza	8:30 PM

TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS

EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00PM
DEC. 23 , 2006	Mishka Adams	9:00 PM
Jan. 16 , 23 , 30 , 2007	Dyords Ko Po	8:30 PM
	FOR INQUIRIES PLS CALL 722-4532 LOC 116	

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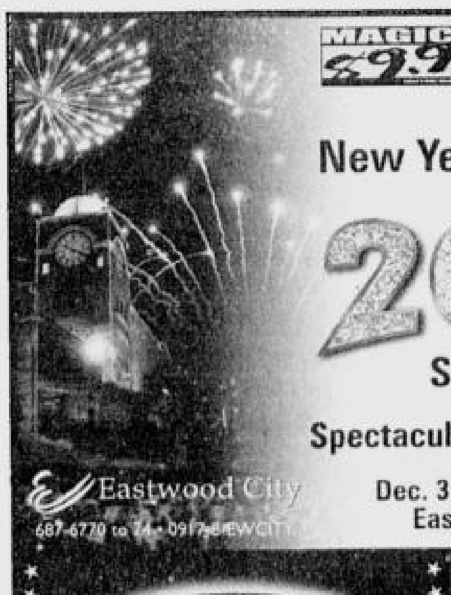

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GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1	TENACIOUS D 1:40, 4:00, 6:20 8:40, 11:00	
2	A GOOD YEAR 2:55, 5:40, 8:25, 11:00 PG-13	
3	DECK THE HALLS 12:50, 3:10, 5:30 G	CASINO ROYALE 7:50, 11:00 PG-13
4	HAPPY FEET 1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00 G	

WITH "Good Shepherd" co-star Matt Damon, a good friend of Brad's.

Angelina Jolie opens up for the first time

From page E8

in need all over the world, has a genuine passion to improve the plight of orphans and refugees and is a good mother to her adopted kids, Maddox and Zahara and to her own daughter with Brad Pitt, Shiloh.

Angelina stars in the movie "The Good Shepherd," which does not refer to the savior whose birth is celebrated on Christmas but is used as a term to describe the idealistic and patriotic intelligence agent played by Matt Damon. In the movie directed by Robert De Niro about the origins of the CIA, Angelina's character is driven to drink from her frustration in living with a man (Matt) whose work demands secrets and lies.

How are you going to spend the holidays?

We're going somewhere this Christmas. We'll spend the morning with our children, have a wonderful time with them and make it special for them and not forget that. We're going to spend the day with some other people, bring them some things, listen and talk to them. I want to teach my kids that it's not about what they're going to get but it's about who they're going to think of, what they're going to do, what they're going to learn and who they are going to extend kindness to. The season is a good excuse to teach our children something really nice.

Spiritually, are Brad and you on the same page?

Yes, I would say that. We're not of any one faith ourselves but we are teaching the children about different faiths. We believe (in teaching them about) that. We believe that you should understand and learn about all the different faiths. Then teach your children and see where they fall and celebrate many different things. I suppose that is a unique thing to be very much in agreement on.

Do you have any respite from the paparazzi at all?

We were just recently in our home in Cambodia and nobody was there. So there are ways and there are places (where there are no paparazzi). We also went to Brad's parents' house for about five days. That was lovely and quiet. Hopefully in the years to come, maybe if we work less, we'll have more of a quiet life. Then our kids will have a more normal life. We just try not to let it (the paparazzi issue) affect us. It only does when we want the kids to have more freedom but other than that, we try to ignore it. There are worse problems so we're OK.

Would you like to get married again?

I have had two beautiful marriages (first to British actor Johnny Lee Miller and then to American actor Billy Bob Thornton) in my life. I don't feel a need to get married at all at this moment. But I am committed to another person (Brad) and three children. I think that's the most important. For people who want to be married, it's a beautiful thing. It's a wonderful thing and I'm all for it.

How much do you enjoy flying your own plane?

I love it. It certainly gives me a freedom that I don't have on the ground. Flying is a real skill. I know that sounds odd but I have spent my whole life with a job that is kind of odd. I interpret behavior, tell stories and I emote—those are not practical skills. So it was really wonderful for me as a woman and as a person to go back to school, take tests, study and learn a proper physical skill I can expand on. Hopefully one day, I would be able to give service as a pilot.

How often do you fly?

I flew until I was about six and a half months pregnant. And then I wasn't allowed to fly anymore. I flew about two months after Shiloh was born. I fly whenever I can. I haven't been able to fly recently but probably I'll fly in January and February.

Which of your movies made the most impact on you personally?

I think everything does one way or the other. The funniest and probably the truest example is "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider" because it was about other countries. It was about being physically strong, fit and focused. So it got me healthy and let me travel to Cambodia. Cambodia changed my life. The next film let me travel to Africa. So in working with local people, you learn about these countries not just as a tourist. But I would say that Cambodia was the most significant one. Learning about land mines and refugees and the history of a country I knew very little about changed me and made me start to question. That was really the beginning of me questioning things.

Has being famous hindered or blocked your desire to help in many countries?

It has been the best use of my celebrity. When I was younger, I didn't know quite what to do with my celebrity status. You don't really do interviews to talk about other topics. You haven't come to many conclusions. You don't have a lot to say. So to find a purpose in my life really helped me. I wake up and I don't think about meaningless little things that I am worried about for myself. I'm able to focus outward and that is just a healthier way to live. Certainly the position I'm in has made it very easy for me to be able to meet with officials, get briefings and do things quicker. That's an even exchange. The negative side of it is your credibility is questioned. A lot of people are out to make a very silly story when you're trying to focus on something else or question why you do things. That's to be expected.

Is it more difficult to be a mother of a boy or of girls?

I don't know. They're very different. My boy was my first baby so that was hard. Perhaps when they're teenagers, I'd say it's harder to be a mother of a girl or I'd be more nervous about the girls going on dates than about the boy. That's when it comes back at us. They're interesting, crazy and wild in their own ways.

My son is very close to me. I don't know if that's because we were alone for a long time. I can see a little bit of a difference between a mother and son and between a daddy and his girls. It's quite interesting. On giving birth to a child or adopting a child, I honestly did expect that there would be a different feeling. I was very concerned that there would be and I prepared for that. There was absolutely none. Other than sometimes I look at Shiloh and I see Brad—that's sweet—I don't feel any differently. That was a wonderful surprise. I was so happy to have Shiloh in Africa, that we could do that and for her to have a Namib-

ANGELINA/ E6

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METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

CINEPLEX

1 TENACIOUS - D
2 THE NATIVITY STORY
3 HAPPY FEET
4 CASINO ROYAL 007/A GOOD YEAR

PREMIERE

RENT / THE PRODUCERS

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 SHAOLIN 2 VS. EVIL DEAD
2 REYNA
3 KAMASUTRA

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 BOA
2 PITONG DALAGITA

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 HISTORY OF VIOLENCE
2 GRANDMAS BOY
3 THE MARINE
4 FEAST

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 CASINO ROYAL 007
2 HAPPY FEET
3 THE NATIVITY STORY
4 SPIRIT TRAP

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 WORLD TRADE CENTER
2 REYNA

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 TENACIOUS - D
2 A GOOD YEAR
3 CASINO ROYAL 007 JAMES BOND
4 HAPPY FEET

starmall
(Mandaluyong) tel 7266150
3 SHAOLIN VS. EEVILDEAD - 2
4 KAMASUTRA - 3
5 RESERVED

metropolis star
www.clickitbeuty.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994
1 MAKAMUNDO
2 KAMASUTRA - 3
3 HAPPY FEET
4 HUWAG KANG LILINGON

THEATRES
1 HAPPY FEET
2 ANG PAMANA
3 REYNA

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 BARNYARD
2 PITONG DALAGITA
3 THE GRUDGE - 2
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 FEAST
4 ANG PAMANA

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
1 THE MARINE
2 FLAG OF OUR FATHER
3 RESRVED
4 RESRVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6773
1 BARANG
2 REYNA
3 TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 REYNA
2 THE RETURN
3 CASINO ROYAL 007 JAMES BOND
4 STEP UP

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 TENACIOUS - D
2 THE NATIVITY STORY / INANG YAYA
3 SHAOLIN VS. EEVILDEAD - 2
4 HAPPY FEET
5 SPIRIT TRAP
6 CASINO ROYAL 007
7 THE COVENANT
8 DECK THE HALLS
9 THE SANTA CLAUSE - 3
10 HUWAG KANG LILINGON / REYNA

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 HAPPY FEET
2 THE RETURN
3 BARANG

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 THE MARINE
2 BARANG

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 MAKAMUNDO
2 PITONG DALAGITA

Blue Wave
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 HUWAG KANG LILINGON
2 THE NATIVITY
3 HAPPY FEET
4 RESERVED

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 KAMASUTRA
2 MAKAMUNDO
3 PARAISO SA GUBAT
4 THE COVENANT

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 FEAST
2 DARK DANCERS
3 PITONG DALAGITA
4 MAKAMUNDO
5 TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
1 SHAOLIN 2 VS. EVIL DEAD
2 SNAKE ON A PLANE
3 MAKAMUNDO
4 RESERVED
5 RESERVED

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 MY FIRST WEDDING
2 HAPPY FEET
3 ROOM SERVICE
4 THE RETURN

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 REYNA
2 BARANG
3 MAKAMUNDO
4 RESERVED

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 INANG YAYA
2 THE GRUDGE - 2

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GALLERIA

1 CASINO ROYALE • THX
1:00 4:00 7:00
2 HAPPY FEET
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30
3 SA ILALIM NG COGON
12:00 1:50 3:40 5:30
4 KAMA SUTRA 3
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00
5 TENACIOUS D
1:30 3:35 5:40 7:45
6 Reserved for VICTORY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
7 SPIRIT TRAP
12:30 2:50 5:10
8 THE NATIVITY STORY
12:30 2:50 5:10
9 BORAT 12:30 2:35
A GOOD YEAR 5:00 7:30
10 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD 2
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45

ERMITA 638-7809 to 12

1 SPIRIT TRAP 12:35 2:50 5:05 7:25 9:50
2 REYNA 12:00 1:50 3:40
THE NATIVITY STORY 6:00 8:00 10:00
3 CASINO ROYALE
11:00 1:40 4:20 7:00 9:50
4 KAMA SUTRA 3
12:35 2:50 5:05 7:25 9:50
5 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD 2
12:35 2:50 5:05 7:25 9:50
6 HAPPY FEET
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
7 TENACIOUS D
12:35 2:50 5:05 7:25 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193 / 682-8199

1 REYNA
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
2 HAPPY FEET
11:05 1:35 4:05 6:35 9:05
3 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD 2
11:30 1:55 4:20 6:45 9:10
4 THE NATIVITY STORY
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10
5 TENACIOUS D
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10
6 SPIRIT TRAP
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10
7 CASINO ROYALE
12:30 3:20 6:10 9:00
8 INANG YAYA
12:40 2:45 4:50 6:55 9:00

NOVALICHES

1 CASINO ROYALE
2 HAPPY FEET
3 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD 2
4 REYNA

CITISQUARE MALABON

1 ANG PAMANA:THE INHERITANCE
2 REYNA
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER

1 TENACIOUS D
2 HAPPY FEET
3 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD 2
4 SPIRIT TRAP

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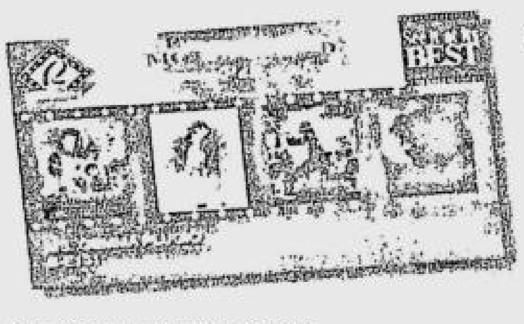

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1 FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS
2 SANTA CLAUSE 3
3 MY FIRST WEDDING
4 DECK THE HALLS

LIPA (043) 757-36 / (043) 312-5870

1 HAPPY FEET
2 THE RETURN
3 MY FIRST WEDDING
4 STEP UP

DASMARINAS (046) 852-2125 / (046) 416-4332

1 FEAST
2 ANG PAMANA:THE INHERITANCE
3 A GOOD YEAR
4 HAPPY FEET

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 THE MARINE
2 ZU WARRIORS
3 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS
4 MEE-SHEE

IMUS (046) 875-3838 / (046) 471-8188

1 THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
2 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS
3 FEAST
4 REYNA

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 / (045) 961-6270

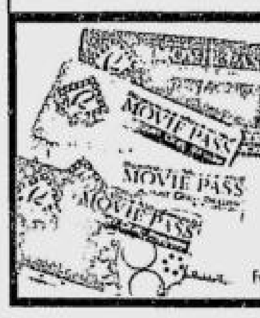
1 HAPPY FEET
2 MEE-SHEE
3 REYNA
4 THE RETURN
5 FRAGILE
6 THE MARINE

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 / (034) 441-0458

1 FRAGILE
2 MEE-SHEE
3 THE NATIVITY STORY
4 CASINO ROYALE
5 BARNYARD
6 HAPPY FEET

ILOILO (033) 338-8070

1 FRAGILE
2 THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
3 HAPPY FEET
4 REYNA



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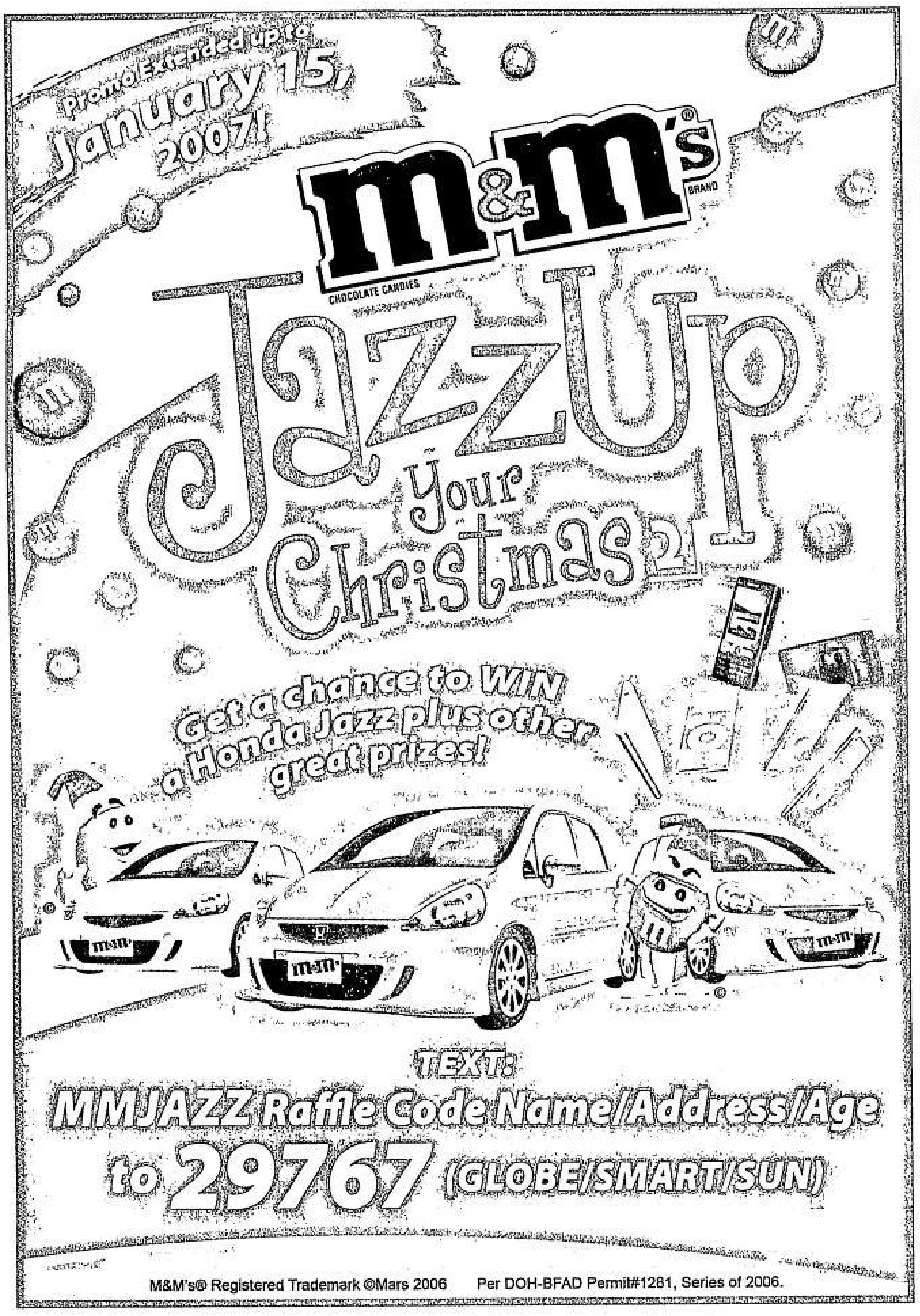
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ANGELINA JOLIE
in "The Good Shepherd"

Angelina Jolie opens up for the first time, part 2

How she, Brad and kids will spend Christmas

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

LOS ANGELES—*Maligayang Pasko!*

On the eve of Christmas, we continue our column on Angelina Jolie, who embodies the true spirit of the season. She gives big chunks of her movie salaries to help people

ANGELINA/ E7

Rated "A" by Cinema Evaluation Board
MTRCB RATING R-13 Strictly for 13 years of age and up
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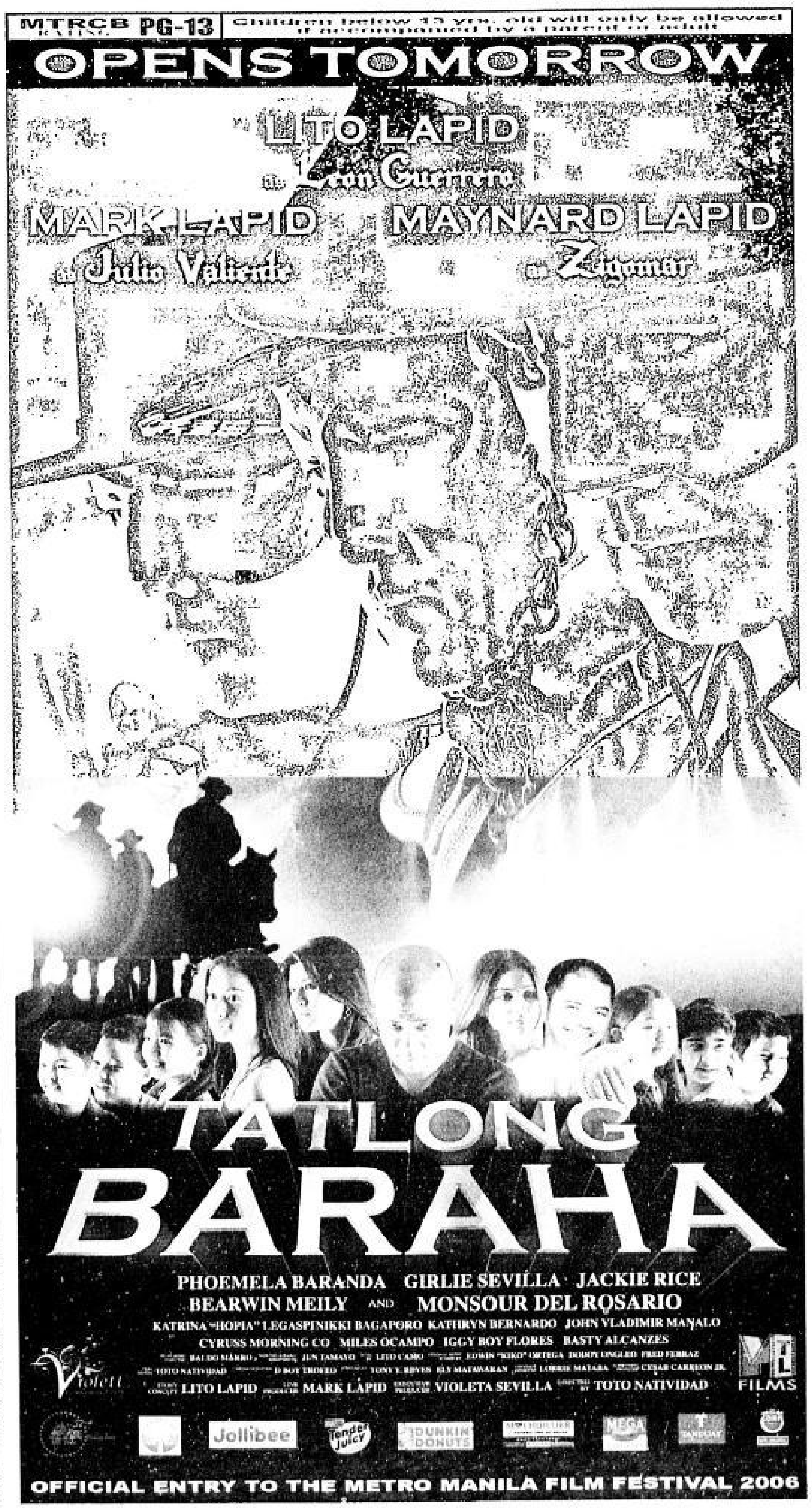
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PHOEMELA BARANDA GIRLIE SEVILLA JACKIE RICE
BEARWIN MEILY AND MONSOUR DEL ROSARIO
KATRINA "HOPIA" LEGASPI NIKKI BAGAPORO KATHRYN BERNARDO JOHN VLADIMIR MANALO
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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2006 F

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
ITB NO.: 11-06-2006

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), is inviting all car dealers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	:	Supply and Delivery of Two (2) units 4-Door Brand New Sedan
Brief Description	:	Sedan, 5.7 liter, multi-displacement, 16 valves, V8 engine, 340hp / 5,200 rpm, 390 lb-ft / 4,200 rpm, 5-speed automatic – RWD
Approved Budget	:	Six Million Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 6,500,000.00)
Source of Fund	:	Internally Funded

Only suppliers duly registered with PAGCOR shall be allowed to participate in the bidding. Unregistered suppliers must register at the Suppliers Registration & Evaluation Section (SRES), Procurement & Property Department (PPD), 2nd Floor PAGCOR House, 1330 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila, Tel. No. 526-0573.

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/ Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	December 13, 2006 – January 9, 2006
2. Pre-Bid Conference	December 28, 2006 (10:30 am)
3. Submission of Bids	January 10, 2007 (2 pm)
4. Opening of Bid	January 10, 2007 (2 pm onwards)

Bid documents will be available to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of *Three Thousand Two Hundred Fifty & 00/100 Pesos (Php 3,250.00)*. In order to secure the documents, bidders should present the Official Receipt issued by our Cashier to the BAC Secretariat.

PAGCOR assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

PAGCOR reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Please address all communications to the BAC Secretariat Unit, Procurement & Property Department.

(Sgd.) RAFAEL A. FRANCISCO
Chairperson, BAC 3

(PDI – December 17 & 24, 2006)

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF LA UNION, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/ manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder contract:

NAME OF CONTRACT	LOCATION	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT	CONTRACT DURATION
1. DRUGS & MEDICINES	Provincial Capitol Building, City of San Fernando, La Union	Purchases of Drugs & Medicines, Medical/ Surgical, Laboratory Supplies, Dental and X-Ray for LUMC and District Hospitals	P2,649,288.30	180 CD
2. MEDICAL/SURGICAL			P 938,706.00	180 CD
3. LABORATORY			P 385,358.00	180 CD
4. DENTAL			P 109,237.00	180 CD
5. X-RAY			P 165,680.00	180 CD

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities		Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents		January 3, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference		January 8, 2007, 9:00 A.M.
3. Opening of Bids	a. Drugs and Medicines	January 15, 2007, 9:00 A.M., Board Room, Provincial Capitol, SFC
	b. Medical/Surgical	January 16, 2007, 9:00 A.M.
	c. Laboratory	January 17, 2007, 9:00 A.M.
	d. Dental	January 17, 2007, 1:00 P.M.
	e. X-Ray	January 17, 2007, 1:00 P.M.
4. Bid Evaluation		January 18 to January 26, 2007
5. Post-Qualification		January 18 to January 26, 2007
6. Notice of Award		January 18 to January 26, 2007

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of for Drugs and Medicines = P2,500.00, Medical/Surgical Supplies = P1,500.00; Laboratory = P1,000.00; Dental & X-Ray = P500.00 to the Office of the Provincial Treasurer's Cashier.

The PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF LA UNION assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) DR. GEOFFREY S. TILAN
BAC Chairman

Contact Person
MS. CATHERINE F. FRANCO
BAC TWG Chairman/Assistant Provincial Budget Officer
Tel. No. (072) 700-5309
(PDI–Dec. 24 & 31, 2006)

Accord boosts RP-Spain cooperation on language, culture

THE COOPERATION AND INTERaction between the Philippines and Spain in the area of language and culture have been strengthened with the forging of an accord Wednesday between the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Instituto Cervantes de Manila (ICM), the cultural arm of the Spanish government.

Labor and Employment Secretary Arturo D. Brion said that the newagreement "marks an implementation of the basic accord forged in the course of President Arroyo's visit to Spain early this year."

Under the DOLE-ICM accord, both parties have agreed to conduct a Spanish language and cultural orientation so that qualified workers (for local call centers or overseas) would be equipped in performing their jobs. The DOLE shall establish the selection criteria, process, and methodology that will ensure suitable levels of qualification and professionalism, based on the learning goals, course syllabus, and rates agreed.

The ICM, on the other hand, shall assist the DOLE, through the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, come up with a syllabus as the standard to be used by training institutions.

The ICM shall handle, based on reasonable fees payable by enrolled workers, the Spanish language and culture training needs; teachers/facilitators in the conduct of the course; as well as the assessment of workers trained in other institutions. At the same time, the institute will provided facilities including classrooms, training, and other materials.

Brion signed the new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) "On Cooperation for the Organization and Administration of Courses on the Spanish Language and Culture" for the DOLE, while Director Jose Rodriguez Rodriguez represented the ICM.

"I expect our accord to help train successfully our aspirants for Spanish-language call center jobs at home, as well as to reinforce the welfare of workers under our Pilot Project with Spain – as without a knowledge of the Spanish language, there will be no jobs in Spain," Brion said. "By equipping and jointly certifying our workers on Spanish language skills, we in effect also arm them with protection against the menace of illegal recruiters preying on unsuspecting migrants."

For his part, ICM Director Rodriguez said that Spain accords importance to the further strengthening of the Spanish language, a global language spoken by 440 million people worldwide, whose "economic value is now at 15 percent of the Spanish economy's Gross Domestic Product (GDP)."

"Our government wants to raise this percentage higher," he said, adding, "this means that without a knowledge of the language and our culture, there are no jobs awaiting anyone in Spain."

Child Neurology Congress set

THE CHILD NEUROLOGY SOCIETY OF THE Philippines Inc, in cooperation with the Philippine Neurological Association will host the 9th Asian and Oceanian Congress of Child Neurology (AOCCN) on Jan. 24-27 at the Waterfront Hotel in Cebu city. With its theme "Building Bridges in the Practice of Child Neurology," the congress is the first international gathering in pediatric neuroscience to be held in the country.

The congress' main objective is to promote the neurological health of all the children in the region through an active exchange of knowledge and expertise not only among the different member-nations of the region but also among the different medical and paramedical disciplines involved in the care of children with neurological problems.

Dr. Aida Salonga, president of the 9th AOCCN, together with the organizing committee, has crafted a program of activities which includes topics that will focus on the burden of childhood neurological and mental health problems, the effects of the environment on the developing brain and the application of advanced research and technology in the improvement of diagnostic, therapeutic and neuroprotective modalities for our children.

To date, the organizers have confirmed the participation of 56 foreign and eight local speakers, all experts in their field, who will either be in the main convention consisting of six plenary lectures, 12 simultaneous symposia topics, three special symposia for discussions on regional activities, six industry-sponsored luncheon symposia, and two breakfast meetings. Workshops and simultaneous symposia will focus on the common neurological disorders such as epilepsy, ADHD, learning disabilities, electroencephalography and the use of botulinum toxin in spasticity.

The socials committee has planned activities for the Asian and Oceanian delegates, among which are the first Fukuyama Cup which tees-off on Jan. 24, fellowship and cultural night. You may visit the congress website : www.aoccn2007.org.

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Capiz Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CAPELCO) Main office at Timpas, Panitan, Capiz invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Barangay Electrification Project in Mun. of Tapaz and Jamindan, Capiz as follows

1. Delivery and installation of Forty two (42) channels PV battery charging stations.
2. Delivery and installation of Thirty two (32) Solar Home Systems.
3. Delivery and installation of Four Hundred Twenty Four (424) balance of system.

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable fee of Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00) to the Capiz Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CAPELCO) main office cashier.

Activities	Schedule
Issuance of bid documents	Dec. 27, 2006 to Jan. 5, 2007
Deadline of bid submission	Jan. 12, 2007 @ 9:00 a.m.
Pre-bidding conference	Jan. 4, 2007 @ 10:00 a.m.
Opening of bids	Jan. 12, 2007 @ 10:00 a.m.

All interested bidders shall secure from Department of Energy (DOE) accreditation or certification of good standing aside from the eligibility requirements prescribed by the Capiz Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CAPELCO) at tel. nos. (036) 6340-282; 6340-264; 525-2003 c/o Engr. Jovencio A. Villagracia.

CAPELCO reserves the right to reject any or all bids without disclosing any reason, to waive any minor defects or infirmities therein and to accept such bid as may be considered most advantageous to the Electric Cooperative.

(Sgd.) ENGR. JOVENCIO A. VILLAGRACIA
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – December 22 & 24, 2006)

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that the estate of the late ROSARIO de Jesus VALDEZ was extrajudicially settled among her heir before notary public Atty. Eddie N. Hernandez of Mandaluyong City as per Doc #35, Page #8, Book# XX Series of 2006
(PDI- Dec. 17, 24, 31, 2006)

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that the estate of late Fidel Mercado was extrajudicially settled by sole heir as per Doc 160 Page 3 Book III Series 2006 before Notary Public Randy F Pablo of QC PDI - December 24 and 31,2006 and January 7, 2007

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the deceased CESAR R. MEGIA who died intestate on 12 May 2002 was extrajudicially settled by his heirs on 08 December 2006 before notary public for Makati City, Atty. ALFONSO L. SANTOS,Per Doc. No. 463; Page No. 94; Book No. IX; Series of 2006 of his Notarial Registry.
(PDI-December 17, 24,31,2006)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late SALVADOR J. SIBAYAN has been extrajudicially settled by his heirs as per Doc. 438 Page 88 Book V Series of 2006 by Notary Public Orlando R. Landingin, Jr of Quezon City (PDI-Dec. 24, 31, 2006 & Jan. 7, 2007)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late JOSE PULIDO CRUZ JR. has been extrajudicially settled by the heirs as per Doc#189; Page # 39; Book# 111; Series 2006 by Notary Public EULGENCIO DEL CASTILLO JR.
(PDI Dec. 10,17,24,2006)

Notice is hereby given to the Public that the estate of the late Narcisa B. Atjera who died last Feb. 6, 2000 has been extrajudicially settled by way of an affidavit of self-adjudication by her sole heir Mr. Resureccion D Atjera, Jr. before the Notary Public Arnold Bayobay under his notarial seal identified as Doc No. 14 Page No. 3 Book No. XVII Series of 2006.
PDI-Dec 24&31,2006 &Jan 7,2007

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE ESTATE OF THE LATE MANUEL T. TORRE HAS BEEN EXTRAJUDICIALLY SETTLED BY HIS HEIRS AS PER DOC. # 19; PAGE # 47; BOOK # I; SERIES OF 2006 BEFORE NOTARY PUBLIC ATTY. FE H. PADILLA OF PASAY CITY
PDI-DEC. 10, 17 & 24, 2006

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that the LOYOLA PLANS CONSOLIDATED, INC., Plan Application form nos. 00-00099872; 00-00099875-877; 00-00099879-880; 00-00055554; 00-00055558; 00-00055560; 00-00056352 & 00-00056355-357 issued to LOURNA C. MANALO in Calapan City were lost. (PDI-Dec.17, 24 & 31, 2006)

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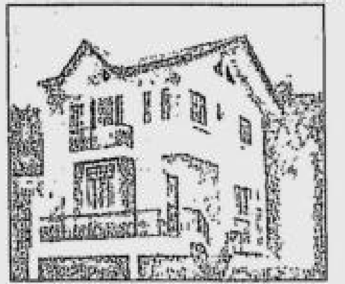
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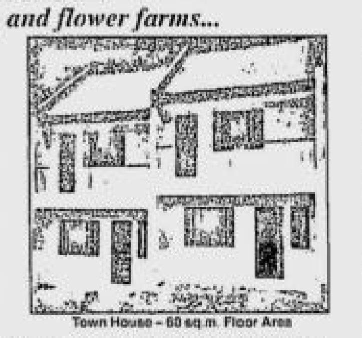
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NOTICE OF LOSS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT STOCK CERTIFICATE NO.A0655961 AZ015602 B0253964 B0391270 ISSUED BY FIDELITY STOCK TRANSFERS. INC. FOR 6805 SHARES OF LIM OAN HIONG HAS BEEN LOST. IF NO CONTEST RECEIVED NEW CERTIFICATES WILL BE ISSUED
PDI-DEC 17, 24 & 31, 2006

Notice is hereby given that Camp John Hay Golf Club Stock Cert. #00167 issued to Rogelio C. Damasco was lost.If no contest is received. new certificate will be issued.
PDI- Dec.10, 17 & 24, 2006

Notice is hereby given that Camp John Hay Golf Club Stock Cert. #00165 issued to Rogelio C. Damasco was lost.If no contest is received. new certificate will be issued.
PDI- Dec.10, 17 & 24, 2006

Notice is hereby given that Camp John Hay Golf Club Stock Cert. #00143 issued to ILDEFONSO J. DAYA was lost.If no contest is received. new certificate will be issued.
PDI- Dec.10, 17 & 24, 2006

Notice is hereby given that the Filinvest Land Inc. Stock Cert. Nos. 00056831-5000shs; 00091733-3750shs; 121270-9375shs; 000162633-23906shs; 00171356-13007shs & ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. Stock Cert Nos. 69931A-500shs; 103677A-1500shs; 134353A-1500shs issued to Marisa Sze have been reported lost. If no contest received new certificates will new issued.
PDI-Dec.10, 17 & 24, 2006

PERSONAL

Thank You Holy Spirit From Gemma P. Santos

PERSONAL

PRAYER TO HOLY SPIRIT
Holy Spirit Thou who make me see everything and show me the way to reach my ideal. You who give me the divine gift to forgive and forget the wrong that is done to me and who are in all instances of my life with me. I, in this short dialogue, want to thank You for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from You, no matter how great the material desires may be. I want to be with You and my loved ones in Your perpetual glory. Amen. - GMG

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PHILAM LIFE

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

The public is hereby notified that **Ms. Catherine C. Aragon** & **Ms. Ma. Maylene S. Flores**, whose pictures and address appear below have ceased to represent The Philippine American Life and General Insurance Company or PHILAMLIFE in any capacity whatsoever in view of the termination their agency contracts effective September 30, 2006 & October 20, 2006, respectively.

MS. CATHERINE C. ARAGON
# 563 5th Street, Balibago
Angeles City, Pampanga 2009

MS. MA. MAYLENE S. FLORES
47-B Benefits St., GSIS Village
Project 8, Quezon City 1106

Any transaction made or entered into by this persons for and on behalf of PHILAMLIFE after September 30, 2006 & October 20, 2006, respectively, is not valid and will not be honored by us.

(PDI – December 24, 2006)

ANNOUNCEMENT

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will be open on Dec. 26, 2006
from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

NOTICE OF DISPOSITION

The National Housing Authority is inviting offers to lease by way of sealed bids a 12,209 square meter property, particularly identified as Portion of lot 5, Psd-003901-030710-D, with existing structure on an *"As Is - Where Is"* located at Vitas, Tondo Manila, at a lease rate of **PhP35.00 per square meter** (subject to adjustment upon approval of the new lease rate).

Interested parties may lease the lot & structure offered, details of which may be secured for a non-refundable fee of PhP200.00 from the COINBAC c/o CIED, Mezzanine Floor, NHA Building, Diliman, Quezon City. For inquiry, please call Ms. Evelyn V. Ramos at the ff. tel. nos.: 923-0390, 922-3001 & 928-4561 loc. 302-303.

SCHEDULE

A.	Submission of Pre-Qualification Requirements	December 22 to 28, 2006 office hours
B.	Pre-Bid Conference	Dec. 27, 2006, 10:00 a.m. Operations Center, NHA Main Office
C.	Submission of Sealed Bids	January 3, 2007, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Operations Center
D.	Opening of Bids	January 3, 2007, 1:30 p.m. Operations Center

The NHA reserves the right to reject any or all bid offers or any part thereof or to waive any required formalities and accept offers most advantageous to the interest of NHA.

(Sgd.) FROILAN R. KAMPITAN
Assistant General Manager &
Chairman, COINBAC

(PDI - Dec. 21 & 24, 2006)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Please be advised that **Allan M. Enarbia, DVM of Lapaz, Ilo-Ilo City** is no longer connected with **PIC Philippines, Inc.** and is not authorized to transact on behalf of the Company. Any transaction entered into or made through him for the Company shall not be honored.

(PDI - Dec. 24, 2006)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Please be informed that **HONEY D. GALANG** is no longer connected with **COMPASS TRAVEL AND TOURS** effective **December 8, 2006.** Any transactions made with her after the said date will not be honored by our office. Thank you.

(PDI - Dec. 24, 27, 31, 2006 & Jan. 3, 2007)

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JOHN 3:16

Message of Thanks

We the family of the late

ATTY. RAMON "CHITO" RODRIGUEZ TELERON

who died in the eternal peace of the Lord at the age of 54 last December 1, 2006,

sincerely convey our deepest gratitude and appreciation to all those who consoled us, offered masses and prayers, sent flowers, extended material and spiritual assistance, kept vigil, attended the funeral rites and in many ways gave us strength and comfort in our time of bereavement.

We would like to request the pious readers to pause for a while in prayer and once more to petition the Lord for the eternal repose of his soul...

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

In the red of health: Coca-Cola gathers thousands for Step Up

EARLY IN THE MORNING, DURING the time when most people were still in bed, they came.

Coming from all corners of Metro Manila, participants traveled to the Market! Market! activity center last Dec. 3, with one common goal. To Step Up with Coca-Cola! Step Up is one of Coca-Cola's healthy and active lifestyle (HAL) initiatives. Coke is a leader in promoting the values of living HAL.

Living HAL includes three key values: eating a balanced diet, proper hydration and regular physical activity. Step Up is Coke's way of encouraging more people to start getting physically active for their health.

Over the past few weeks, three pocket events for Step Up were held at the Quezon City Circle, the Luneta grounds and The Fort grounds. Last Sunday, the biggest Step Up event was held, with the whole day divided into one-hour workout sessions led by Fitness First Instructors.

Every calorie burned by the participants of Step Up was converted into one peso by Coca-Cola and donated to charities. These beneficiaries include the Center for Environmental Awareness and Education, Project Brave Kids, Department of Education, Red Cross, Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines, Food and Nutrition Research Institute, Operation Smile, Gabriel Symphony Foundation, Philippine General Hospital, and the GMA Kapuso Foundation.

The event was hosted by funnyman Bayani Agbayani and the beautiful Dawn Zulueta, to the absolute delight of the crowd.

"I'm happy that I was able to help others just by exercising. I hope Coca-Cola will be able to help more people through programs like this. I also hope that next year, they will hold Step Up again," said Dennis Corpuz, a participant during the 10 to 11 slot of Step Up .

Celebrities also joined in on the workout sessions throughout the day. Comedian Pokwang, Pinoy Big Brother's Jayson Gainza, matinee idols Frank Garcia, Paolo Contis, Polo Ravales, and actresses Regine Tolentino, Ciara Sotto, Pauleen Luna and Alessandra de Rossi all joined in to help promote the values of HAL.

Step Up was actually Regine Tolentino's second time to take part in Coke's HAL initiatives. She shared that health is very important to her life and to her family. "People say that you have to love and take care of yourself before you can love other people, so that includes health. I do whatever I can to take care of my body because it costs you a lot to get sick. I also exercise because as a young mom, it's very important to do physical activities to set an example to my kids."

"When there are events like this for charity and for the promotion of health, I really want to help," she added. "It's a fun activity for the whole family. So it's very important to express that; to promote it and really shout it out to everybody that it's time to change and to start a new lifestyle."

But the enjoyable workout sessions were not the only attractions of Step Up. Regine's group of belly dancers also performed during the event. The colorful costumes and moves of the dancers really served to liven up the crowd. A dance group called the Unlimited Boys also entertained the crowd with their splits and high-flying flips.

Senator Pia Cayetano also graced Step Up by accepting the donation for the Gabriel Symphony Foundation, of which she is the founder. She said "We are very thankful to Coca-Cola for their support. This donation will go a long way to help children with special medical needs."

Many other activities went on outside the workout area. There was a boxing corner where people could learn about the sport. There were booths by different organizations like the Red Cross and the Fitness Experts. The Fitness Experts is a show on Qtv Channel 11 sponsored by Coca-Cola. They offered free nutrition advice to the participants during the day. There were also games like the hydration game which informed participants all about this important aspect of health. All of these activities were aimed at informing more people about the benefits of living HAL.

Of course, employees from Coca-Cola also collaborated with Step Up. The Coca-Cola Export Corporation's president Alex von Behr led the volunteers by joining the 4 to 5 p.m. session. He gamely moved to the music and followed the instructors onstage along with the rest of the large crowd.

At the end of the day, the participants and all those involved during Step Up came home with a sense of fulfillment at having done a good job in promoting HAL. Coca-Cola hopes that next year, Step Up will enjoy the same tremendous support. Until next year, remember to live a healthy and active lifestyle today!

GLOBAL CARGO CARRIERS 6TH INDUSTRY AWARDS

The Global Cargo Carriers Inc (GCCI) presents the IT and Communication Infrastructure Award to Exel Logistics Management Phils during the GCCI's 6th Industry Awards Night held last Nov. 21 at the Philippine Plaza. Shown (from left) are Malaysia Airlines' Rene Banzon, GCCI Industry Awards committee chair; Nonie Abcede, Exel Airfreight clearance manager; Aerotel's Madel Martin, GCCI president; Michael Buckley, Exel (now DHL Global Forwarding) chief operating officer; Eva Air's John David, GCCI vice president.

Get the treatment for osteoarthritis

PROFESSOR JEAN YVES REGINSTER, DIRECTOR of the WHO Collaborating Center for Public Health Aspects of Rheumatic Disorders, said that osteoarthritis patients have a better chance of leading a normal life with the use of the prescription drug crystalline glucosamine sulfate (CGS) than food supplements with glucosamine that are widely marketed in health food stores.

Among the food supplements in the market are glucosamine hydrochloride and chondroitin sulfate. In clinical trials using the pain sub-scale of Western Ontario and McMaster Universities Osteoarthritis Index, it was shown that the outcome of the tests using glucosamine hydrochloride and placebo did not differ significantly. The same results were obtained in trials using chondroitin sulfate and placebo.

The GAIT (Glucosamine/Chondroitin Arthritis Intervention trial) vs. Celecoxib showed that neither glucosamine hydrochloride nor chondroitin sulfate alone is effective for the treatment of osteoarthritis of the knee. And if patients choose to take glucosamine as a dietary supplement, then they should take glucosamine sulfate rather than glucosamine hydrochloride. For those suffering from severe pain, glucosamine sulfate taken with chondroitin sulfate has an additive effect.

"Using food supplements is a gamble for patients. These substances do not have the same formulations and patients do not know exactly what percentage of the supplement is gluscosamine. CGS, however, is backed up by extensive research and guarantees that a patient gets the effective dosage which is 1500 mgs per day," Professor Reginster said.

These precise dosages guarantee results for patients as against food supplements. In the long run this would also mean savings and freedom from the pain and debilitating effects of OA.

The right glucosamine formulation is crucial to the management and treatment of osteoarthritis. Evidence from clinical trials show the preferred medication for long-term treatment of patients with osteoarthritis is crystalline glucosamine sulfate at the oral daily dosage of 1500 mg over glucosamine hydrochloride which was shown to be only marginally effective.

Glucosamine sulfate is a derivative of the natural amino-sugar substance that is the basic component of body cartilage. In its original state, glucosamine sulfate cannot be used in the preparation of medicine or dietary supplements due to its unstable chemical nature. The Rotta Research Group has invented and patented a chemical process to stabilize the substance, thus producing glucosamine sulfate suitable for patients with osteoarthritis.

Aside from Professor Reginster's findings, clinical studies and investigations abroad have also shown that not all glucosamine and supplementary chondroitin products have the same formulation. A study by the U.S. Journal of Rheumatology in 2002 showed that thirteen out of 14 brands were found to contain less than 82 percent glucosamine than what was indicated on their labels. Another study showed an inaccuracy of from zero percent to 115 percent of glucosamine and chondroitin levels in products tested compared to what their labels claimed.

Studies have also proven that the original pharmaceutical grade crystalline glucosamine sulfate is the pharmacologically effective concentration desired to stop the progression of osteoarthritis. Pharmalink & Rottapharm market the preparation Viartril-S in the Philippines.

For more information about glucosamine sulfate Viartril-S, call Rottapharm at 459 2547 and 459 2507 or fax 889 1004.

Clips

Ibaan 175th Founding Anniversary

THE MUNICIPALITY OF IBAAN, BATANGAS will celebrate its 175th founding anniversary on Feb. 11, 2007. One of the activities that will highlight this momentous occasion is the coronation of the Mutya ng Ibaan on the Foundation day. As a prelude to the coronation night, a Grand Ballroom will be held on Dec. 28, at the BR. Medrano Plaza and the candidates of the said pageant will participate in a parade on Dec. 30, the town fiesta, The celebration is expected to draw the attendance of Ibanians who are living in different parts of the country as well as those living abroad. For more information, please visit www.geocities.com/ibaan I75th or contact tel. (043)311-7950.

SM Hypermarket Shop & Win grand draw

THE COUNTRY WILL HAVE THREE NEW millionaires when SM Hypermarket concludes its Shop & Win promo with a highly anticipated grand draw. At stake in the Shop & Win grand draw set for Jan. 19, 2007 at Taste Asia in SM Mall of Asia are cash prizes worth millions of pesos. Shop & Win is one of the grandest promotions of the country's biggest, most convenient, and most reliable supermarket chain, SM Hypermarket. Over 30 individuals have so far won as much as P1 million in the nationwide promo participated in by loyal shoppers of SM Sucat, SM Bicutan, SM Marilao, SM Valenzuela, SM Molino, SM Clark, SM Mall of Asia , SM North Edsa-The Block, and SM Pasig. More than just a simple raffle for shoppers and customers, SM Hypermarket's Shop & Win monthly millionaire promo is SM's way of making a positive impact in the lives of the public through generous financial rewards. Deadline of submission of entries for the grand draw is on Dec. 31.

Ancilla-Saidi's 1st batch of Model grads

THE ANCILLA-SAIDI SCHOOL OF OD produced their first batch of graduates of the Phase 1 of the Master of Arts in Organization Development Major in Enterprise Leadership (Model). A product of the partnership between the two aforementioned respected development institutions, the Model program is a combination of the academic rigor of Saidi and the practical industry application approach of Ancilla, responding to the challenge to continually develop leaders in enterprises and the demand for professionals to pursue higher learning amidst busy work schedules respectively. Schedules for the Phase 1 in 2007 are in 3 cycles: Jan. 27 - Sept. 8, March 10 - Oct. 20 and Sept.1 - May 31 (2008). Phase 1 classes are conducted by Ancilla for 30 Saturdays in Makati. Phase 2 is conducted by Saidi at the learner's own pace and in an open learning environment. For inquiries please call Ms. Verggs Bagunu at (02) 892-2895/96/98 or 891-5568/69 or 848-7967/68; or visit the website: www.ancillaedc.com.ph. Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting is located at Unit 802 Vicente Madrigal Building, 6793 Ayala Ave., Makati City.

Feng Shui Extravaganza

FOLLOWING THE UNDAUNTED SUCCESS of last year's Feng Shui Extravaganza, World of Feng Shui chair Lillian Too is set to return to Manila this January 2007. Hoping to continue igniting the Feng Shui craze among Flipinos, Ms Too will hold another extravaganza entitled "Getting Rich and Staying Safe in the Year of the Fire Boar 2007" on Jan. 27 from 2 to 7 p.m. at the Premiere Cinema of SM Mall of Asia Bay City. On Jan. 28, she will be at the Fiesta Pavilion of the Manila Hotel from 3 to 7 p.m. Joining her on both events is Marites Allen, president and chief executive officer of WOFS Philippines Inc who is also responsible for bringing Lillian Too in the country. For more information on the 2007 Feng Shui Extravaganza, you may call 910-6000/914-7888/0920-950-9390 or e-mail your inquiries to philippines@worldoffengshui.com or log on to www.wofs.com.

Astana songfest winner

OLIVIA, ONE OF THE BEST SINGERS THE Philippines has produced, was the official representative of the Philippines to the prestigious Astana Song Festival held in Kazakhstan, Russia, bagging the Best Performance Award (the first ever for a Filipino) and easily became the Darling of the Russian Press. Known very well in the lounge circuit, Olivia is very much sought after by the Philippines' top hotels and lounge venues. Like a diamond shining on its own accord, this award-winning teenage singer is considered as the latest singing sensation to hit the local entertainment scene today. Her outstanding talent can't be made secret in the music industry. Just recently, Olivia spearheaded a Filipino entertainment troupe composed of musicians and performers in Hong Kong and Taiwan where the Philippines was one of the many participants in the international trade fair and tourism expo. Last Nov. 25, Olivia had an intimate benefit concert entitled "Olivia Goes Broadway" at the Broadway's Celebrity Lounge at Broadway Centrum, Quezon City. The concert was for the benefit of Little Angels Home Inc. in Tagaytay City, an orphanage of infants and children.

Maybank 4th largest bank in Southeast Asia

MAYBANK WAS RECENTLY RANKED among the top performing banks in the Asia Pacific. In the 2006 edition of the "Asian Banker 300", an annual ranking and survey of the largest and strongest banks in the region, Maybank was ranked 4th largest in Southeast Asia. Asian Banker also ranked Maybank among the region's largest banks in terms of assets and net profits, and among the top 40 strongest banks in Asia Pacific. This recognition of Maybank followed various awards and accolades earlier bestowed, many of which came from leading entities and publications such as Euromoney, AsiaMoney, and the Financial Times. Maybank has also emerged as the 5th Best Big Bank in Asia. This is a ranking of top Asian banks that delivered the highest returns for shareholders over the past five years, according to an annual survey conducted by Mercer Oliver Wyman.

X-mas at the Century Park Hotel

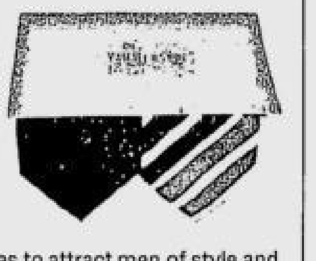
CENTURY PARK HOTEL CELEBRATES ITS "Three Decades of Christmas!" Have a sumptuous gathering at Cafe in the Park with family or friends and indulge in a lunch or dinner buffet for only P935+++ for adults and P535+++ for children (ages 4-12 years old). Celebrate an evening of intimate gathering from 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. at Harry's Bar at the Top of the Century, amidst the spectacular backdrop of the Manila skyline. Experience an exclusive accommodation when you avail the Twilight Package from Dec. 4 to 29, except on closed out dates from Dec. 12 to 13, 24 to 26, and Sundays. While the Sundown Special Package is available from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., Monday to Saturday for only P812.50 nett per person, for a minimum of 35. Delight in Century Park's very own version of the best-loved holiday delicacies selling at the lower lobby until Jan. 07, 2007. Stay overnight or more and experience an intimate moment with the whole family. In celebration of the hotel's 30th year anniversary, Century Park Hotel offers a Christmas package dubbed as "30 Reasons to Stay at Century Park on Christmas", the promo is valid from Dec. 16 to Jan. 10, 2007 with a rate of only P4,500 net/per night. For inquiries and reservations, call (632) 528-8888.

A new look for Fujifilm

FUJIFILM, CONSTANTLY ON THE FOREfront of leading and top-quality digital photography technology and printing, is taking on its forward-thinking mission even better through a new, more dynamic logo. The new logo design streamlines the Fujifilm brand, doing away with the old red hexagon symbol. In its place is a sparse but eye-catching and more dynamic red geometric symbol integrated in the stylized typeface of the brand name — a modernized symbol for an even more forward-thinking, innovative company. It also bears the spunk of Fujifilm's aggressive capital investments and research and development focus that now operates in fields like medical imaging and life sciences; documents; graphic arts; and high-function materials such as flat panel displays, electronic materials, and optical devices. With Fujifilm working towards business development and expansion, the unveiling of the new corporate brand logo aims to clearly communicate continuing growth thus, strengthening further its corporate brand including the Philippines. Fujifilm's exclusive local distributor YKL Color, in its effort to synergize with the significant change in the global corporate structure, adopted its own new look to reinforce Fujifilm's presence in the country even further. Given the new logo and the soon-to-be defunct competitor Konica-Minolta which will cease to operate worldwide by March of 2007, Fujifilm is expected to dominate even more the lucrative and highly competitive market of digital photography and printing globally.

ProductFILES

Van Heusen promo

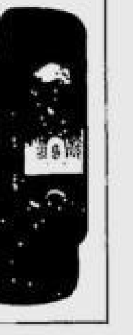


VAN HEUSEN, AMERICA'S NO. 1 DRESS SHIRT BRAND OFFERS 2 free neck ties for every 2 dress shirts purchase. With every minimum value purchase of a P990 dress shirt, the customer is entitled to a set of two free ties beautifully packaged in a red box. This promo runs until Jan. 10, 2006. By paying great attention to detail, fabric, finish, silhouette and packaging innovations, Van Heusen continues to attract men of style and prestige from all over the world. Recently, Van Heusen has launched two major collections - The Enrique Zobel Limited Edition Collection (which part of the proceeds support the Enrique Zobel Foundation) and the "Give Me Italy Collection". Van Heusen apparel, accessories and innerwear are available in Van Heusen boutiques and leading Department Stores nationwide.

Experience fun dining only at Heaven 'n Eggs

CHEF PETER AYSON, FORMER SOUS CHEF OF THE AWARD-WINNING gourmet breakfast restaurant Orange in Chicago, USA and one of the best chefs in the country focusing on breakfast and American food joins Heaven 'n Eggs. Chef Pete introduces new exciting dishes which include Omelets, Chicken Chingladera - chicken omelet in tortilla wrap, served with rustic mashed potatoes; Green Eggs and Ham - pesto flavored omelet with ham, topped with kesong puti and sun dried tomatoes, served with rustic mashed potatoes and wheat triangles. Enjoy traditional French toast topped with caramelized apples and skewered with fruits. Heaven 'n Eggs Healthy Light Sandwiches comes with grilled vegetables and alfalfa on wheat bread, served with salad and sweet potato chips. Have a taste of Smoked Salmon Americana - smoked Norwegian salmon on wheat bread, served with salad and sweet potato chips; or the Grilled Chicken Wrap - Mexican inspired chicken wrap, with a hint of spicy chipotle. Watch out for the afternoon tea sets which comes in different flavors this month of December. Visit Heaven 'n Eggs branches are located in CKB Building in Tomas Morato, Quezon City (376-2674), Ground Floor Glorietta 4 (818-2792), Fuente Circle in Eastwood City (912-1172) and Market! Market! (889-3791).

Why choose when the Xda Stealth lets you do it all



LUSTING FOR THE LATEST MULTITASKING PDA, BUT LOVE THE FAMILIARITY OF A conventional mobile phone? The new Xda Stealth from O2 lets you have both in one sleek jet-black package. O2's first PDA-phone with a slide-out alphanumeric keypad is a fusion of functionality and versatility. Use the device whichever way you fancy: You can make phone calls and enjoy instant messaging, SMS and email applications by tapping on the 2.4" QVGA TFT-LCD display panel or by pressing the 12-key phone keypad with one hand. Stylus or keypad, it's your choice. It is powered by an Intel Xscale PXA 272 Processor at 416MHz and comes with 192MB Flash ROM and 64MB RAM of on-board memory. An expandable miniSD memory card slot also lets you grow your MP3 collection and snap away on the 2.0 mega pixel camera without any worries. Bundled with an array of multimedia and office applications, the Xda Stealth offers all the business, play and lifestyle applications at a few taps of the stylus or - literally - at your fingertips.

'Yuletide Season Promo' at Bayview Park Hotel

EXPERIENCE THE PLEASURE OF YOUR holiday vacation, as Bayview Park Hotel, 'your home by the bay', launches its promo package, dubbed as "Yuletide Season Promo". Marie Jean P. Cordero, director of sales and marketing proudly said that for only P3,375 net guests can enjoy these exclusive amenities. Overnight stay in our newly refurbished Superior Room, for Single or Double occupancy; Buffet Breakfast at the Lobby Lounge; Welcome drinks; Shuttle service to Baywalk and SM Mall of Asia; and Unlimited use of swimming pool and Gym.

Hurry! Promo runs until Jan. 7, 2007 only. For reservations, please call 526-1555 locals 1759/1727 or 521-0919/526-1538 and e-mail to bookings@bayviewparkhotel.com. BPHM is located at 1118 Roxas Blvd. corner U.N. Ave., Manila.

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Developing whole-brain organizations - Part 2

By Cecile Manikan
Professor, Asian Institute of Management

A WHOLE-BRAIN PERSON EMploys all the mental processes of the four-quadrant brain: he is logical (A), organized (B), feeling (C), and intuitive (D).

Translated to business enterprises, he can analyze, organize, personalize and strategize. These major functions demand whole-brain facility, so for the organization to hum efficiently, the CEO must be whole-brained. This is very much like a conductor of an orchestra who must know the language and qualities of each instrument for him to balance and harmonize the different voices into a cohesive and powerful musical opus.

Employee training programs should include holistic development to foster understanding and appreciation of all the components of an organization. When people are dissatisfied or unhappy, it is almost certain that some quadrants have not been properly addressed in the decision or communication process.

Packaging training programs should also address all brain preferences. When training is based mostly toward one teaching style, persons with other preferences will experience a great deal of frustration. Participants can check out mentally when the training or learning environment has too many of the frustrations for their brain preference. An example would be complaints about vague, ambiguous frameworks coming from A quadrant thinkers or disorganization, poor sequencing, and lack of practice time from B thinkers. The C quadrant thinkers would usually voice out dissatisfaction over lack of sensory inputs in a sterile learning climate or an impersonal approach while the D-quadrant thinkers might become impatient with a lack of overview on objectives and directional impact.

Typically, a balanced training module should include activities for each quadrant's preference. Initially, it should be designed to include an agenda (B), overview (D), warm up (C), and factual lecture (A). Methodologies should include concrete examples (B), brainstorming, or mind-mapping (D), critical review of material (A) and journalizing or stories (C).

Working environments, managerial, leadership and communication styles should also address dominant brain preferences of employees. The staffing function can considerably reduce work-related stress if brain preference is matched with expected output or deliverables, the kind of work setting it requires, and the motivational and reward system that can work best for the employee.

Under the Self-Mastery Module at the Asian Institute of Management, the "Learning How to Think" sessions supply students with quadrant brain activities by which they can assess their own brain dominance. Similarly, there are activities for developing less-preferred quadrants such as case analysis for (A), doing "how to" manuals (B), writing personal case histories (C), or opportunity spotting exercises (D). The course objective is to develop critical, creative and systemic thinking that hones whole-brain competence.

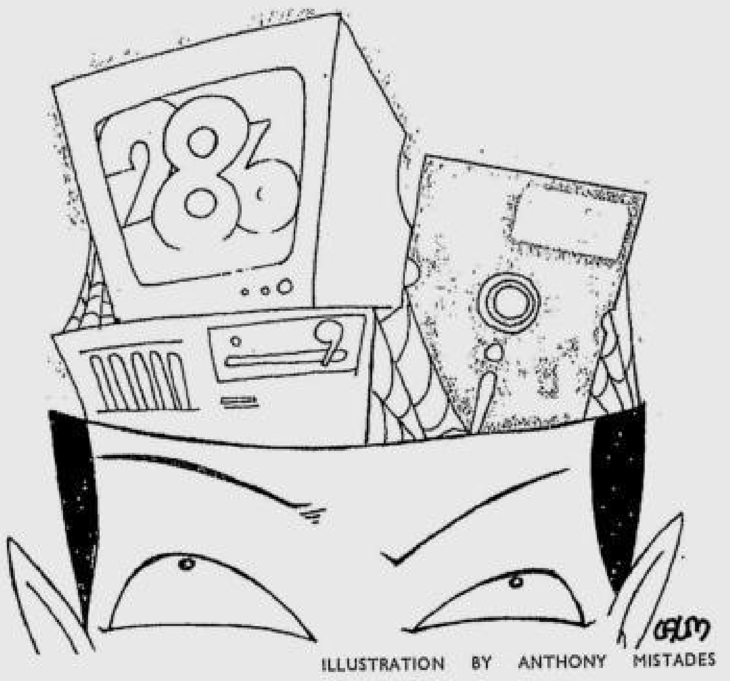


ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY MISTADES

The whole-brain concept is not complete without knowledge and understanding of Multi-Intelligences (MI) as advanced by Harvard Education professor Howard Gardner. Gardner's Eight Intelligences include logical-mathematical (number-smart), verbal linguistic (word-smart), visual-spatial (picture-smart), bodily-kinesthetic (body-smart), musical-rhythmic (music-smart), interpersonal (people-smart), intrapersonal (self-smart), and the latest one to be validated is natural intelligence (nature-smart). Learning the language and style of each intelligence has powerful implications in learning environments where there is a need to reach the understanding of as many minds as possible.

Hence, the necessity of matching teaching and learning styles. A teacher or trainor who is able to deliver a body of knowledge in various intelligence languages is definitely more desirable and more effective in educating varied audiences.

It is unfortunate that our traditional educational systems measure aptitude and development in only one or two intelligences—logical, mathematical (IQ) and verbal-linguistic, the two intelligences found in the left hemisphere of the brain. The six other intelligences are found in the right hemisphere (C and D quadrants). There is a need to review dropout rates in schools in view of how we are able to effectively address the other intelligences.

Applied to organizations, the demand for creativity and innovation in the knowledge and global economy requires highly developed left and right brain capabilities. Logical, critical thinking on the left; creative, intuitive and integrative thinking on the right. The more progressive business schools in the world are now offering right brain development among their graduate students. Stanford has its D-School (Design) to complement its MBA functional skills, Harvard offers Positive Psychology, while others are steep in Meditation and Yoga.

In AIM, we have the elective SMARTS (Self-Mastery, Arts and Spirituality) to round up left-brain analytical skills with right brain development in people skills (EQ), creative imagination, intuitive judgment (IQ2), and aesthetic sensibilities through the arts. Spiritual intelligence (SQ) is harnessed to develop the students' adversity quotient (AQ) as he is prepared to face the various challenges of a leader/manager.

As tool for total self-development, however, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is the most popular and widely used all over the world. The MBTI basically correlates to the Hermann Brain Dominance Inventory (HBDI) with more significant refinements that allow deeper understanding of differences in normal behavior. The MBTI can be applied to self-mastery, organizational diagnosis, career pathing, relationship counseling, education and life development of each of the 16 types of personalities. Organizationally, it points out individual giftedness in mental functions and correspondingly draws attention to developmental challenges of each personality type including the inferior function or repressed personalities that may erupt in times of great stress, fatigue or illness. The MBTI is a good tool in understanding mid-life crisis or transition periods in life when mental energies shift in order to cope with changing interests and life situations.

Research in brain development among children is now catching the attention of neuroscientists, behavioral scientists, educators, and would-be parents. The book "The Mozart Effect" by Dan Campbell reveals how classical music, particularly the compositions of Mozart, accelerate speech and motor coordination aside from developing layers of neuropathways that would facilitate abstract and spatial reasoning in the latter stages of child development.

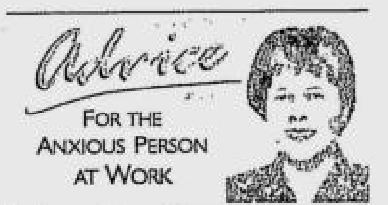
My own professional experience in managing arts organizations attests to the fact that the performing arts (dance, theater, music) is a potent tool for whole brain development. Dance, for example allows sensorial and emotional experience of music and scenery (quadrant C) while learning the technique is a daily repetitive process of skills building (quadrant B). Composing or choreographing goes into the logical analysis of form, style, and structure (quadrant A), while creating an overall impact in terms of energy, imagination and inspiration harness the D quadrant qualities. I often advise my students to send their children to art school if they aspire to give them a holistic development.

Companies can explore the whole-brain potential of the organization by offering training modules that develop the quadrants of the brain. Creative industries can hone the left analytical part of the brain through management training modules while left-brain companies may explore the wonders of right-brain creativity and intuition through art workshops. In the end, holistic training and development result to balanced, happy people leading meaningful lives who are able to produce more not only for themselves but for the company they work for and the society they serve as well.

(The author is a certified MBTI practitioner and teaches self-mastery, strategic management, creativity and intuition, leadership, education management, and arts management at the Asian Institute of Management. Send feedback to cmanikan@aim.edu or 0921-4965771.)

'I have difficulty confronting poor performance!'

By Tita Datu Puangco


Advice
For the Anxious Person at Work

I HAVE BEEN A SUPERVISOR for two years. I am the kind who gets upset when people I supervise are unhappy. I always want my unit to focus on achieving goals and having no interpersonal conflicts in the workplace.

My problem comes every time performance appraisal comes around. We appraise performance twice a year. I have difficulty confronting poor performance. Before appraisal week I worry and spend sleepless nights. Please give me advice how best to tell a subordinate that he is not performing according to standards.

Is there something wrong with me? My other co-supervisors do not appear to be having problems. Thank you for whatever help or advice you can extend to me.

Soft-Hearted Supervisor

I empathize with your difficulty in confronting poor performance. You are not alone. Even experienced managers and supervisors can sometimes dread performance appraisal season. As Filipinos we feel the dilemma more intensely considering that core to our culture is our value of "smooth interpersonal relations." We often don't want to ruffle feelings or upset the stability of the work atmosphere.

As supervisors, we also realize the importance of dealing with substandard performance. Telling the truth is good for the person being coached and good for the organization. It also benefits the supervisor or manager because he is able to deal squarely with the problem and move more decisively to set a climate of trust and achievement in the workplace.

Recently, I came across a very informative book by Bruce Bodaken and Robert Fritz entitled "The Managerial Moment of Truth." The authors claim that truth is one of the most important competitive advantages in building a business. They cited that if managers use their truth technique they will be able to increase capacity from 25 to 40 percent to their organizations without adding significant cost.

They suggest that truth is better than manipulation at any time. In fact, they suggest that corrections should be made when they are small and insignificant before they become a big habit that leads to a full-blown confrontation. This means that you should not wait till the performance appraisal period to correct poor performance.

The Managerial Moment of Truth (MMOT) technique can lead to successful learning and mentoring experience with your team. The technique involves four steps:

First step is to acknowledge the situation. You and the person involved must make sure you recognize the same reality. Simply state the facts. Make sure the person agrees with the facts. Make telling the truth a part of the culture. Assure people that it is acceptable to tell the truth even when it is uncomfortable or it contains bad news.

Step 2 is to do situation analysis. You engage in a real exploration of what actually happened. What decisions and actions led to the current situation? Help the person analyze performance focusing on two elements that together are the keys to good performance. These

DEADLINE: YESTERDAY!

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY MISTADES

are design and execution. Look at elements that led to poor performance. It is important to get the complete story and assumptions made. The task is to understand what happened and not to lay blame for wrong behavior.

Step 3 is to develop an action plan. Discoveries and insights in Step 2 must result in a workable action plan. The plan has to be put in writing by the person involved and a copy furnished to you. Upon receipt of the action plan you can then validate whether the plan captures the intent and meaning of your conversation.

Step 4 is to create a feedback system. Often supervisors conclude the task is done when one has an action plan in place. Often follow through on plans could lead to further adjustments or refinement. Your suggestions will lead to performance improvement. Make feedback a habit.

Practicing the MMOT technique allows the manager to set more ambitious goals beyond simply correcting poor or nonperformance. A manager can then set goals such as aiming for a subordinate's exceptional performance or becoming a valuable team player.

Finally, aim for real and lasting change in the performance of your people. How can we ensure that people do not regress and oscillate between performance and nonperformance? Set clear outcome oriented goals. Create the habit of consistency in truth telling and constancy in mentoring.

Finally, if you have not been trained in Performance Management techniques, contact your human resource department for training or at the minimum get an orientation on what makes for successful performance appraisals. All the best.

(The author is CEO of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting, a training and consulting company specializing in strategy management, leading change, human resource systems, leadership and enterprise training.)

It's our choice

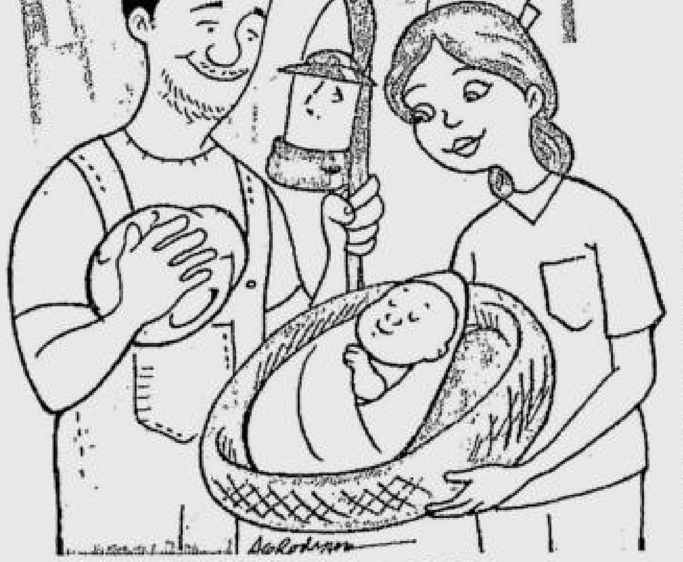
By Teresa R. Tunay, OCDS

FOR TODAY, CHRISTMAS DAY, LET'S GET A DAY OFF FROM TALKING about work. Let's talk about the movies instead (chuckle). Did you see "The Nativity Story?" Did you notice when the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary? Where was Mary then and what was she doing? She was resting from work, blotting off her sweat, sitting on the ground and leaning against an olive tree, when an unusual breeze stirred the branches and the leaves above her. She had had a particularly trying day that began with getting betrothed to a man she didn't love but had to accept out of filial obedience and economic need. Whew, how many of our 14-year-old girls nowadays can absorb that emotional shock with such equanimity as that which Mary displayed? But anyway, there she was, resting from work, when a bemoustached and bearded angel appeared to tell her she was going to—well, in modern lingo—have a baby without benefit of sex. Incredible, but she believed the angel was announcing God's plan for her, and she said Okay, God's will be done.

We all know Mary cooperated with God's plan, otherwise we wouldn't have today to celebrate, but the thing I'm driving at is: nowadays when we don't work in olive groves but are instead steeped in sophisticated machinery that practically run by themselves to do the work for us, do we still believe in messengers of God? When we're faced with a work situation that drains us of creative energy, do we count on Experts and Consultants to rescue us? Would we give a hoot at all if an angel of God popped up in our computer screen telling us what to do?

Our beliefs usually spell the difference between frustration and fulfillment, anxiety and bliss. The happy truth is: we are free to choose what to believe, and it is our choice that gives power to what we believe in. Merry Christmas! *(E-mail the author at teresa_de_manila @yahoo.com)*

REFLECTIONS FOR THE WORKING SOUL



Gospel Lk. 1: 39-45

"Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

Christmas for workers

By Bishop Precioso D. Cantillas, SDB, DD

THE EVENT OF THE FIRST CHRISTMAS HAPPENED IN THE LIVES of simple, ordinary people and settings which could be referred to the workers' world—Joseph, a carpenter; Mary, a simple ordinary "servant" girl; the shepherds working day and night; the stable and the work animals.

It would seem therefore exhilarating to ponder that God is so close to the workers and their world; that the Almighty Creator chose to live with the workers and somehow continue to "work" His creations through the mortal workers whom He would endow with His love and life. This amazing and mysterious reality could inspire the workers and give greater meaning and value to their labors in life.

Christmas for workers could mean more than just the Christmas parties organized by the company or by the labor union, the bonus and other gifts which normally come more abundantly during the season, or the much-awaited break for rest and relaxation with their families.

It could provide the workers with a greater sense of security in the belief that the Loving Father is just within their midst; it gives them a more genuine feeling of joy and happiness believing in the Presence of the Savior and wanting to live united in His loving presence daily and in every moment more than just receiving the season's presents and gifts from friends and loved ones.

The workers, therefore, who celebrate Christmas with the spirit of faith, would be truly "blessed" not only with material blessings but more especially with the spiritual awareness of the eternal value and meaning of his simple, daily toils in the workplace. *(E-mail the author at mfvg@skyinet.net)*

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* *Japanese-speaking CSR's must be a native speaker and will be working on day shift*

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- Provides analysis and reporting for ongoing and adhoc projects
- Assists in compiling lists of email and direct mail recipients based on statistical models built by senior consultants using SAS querying tool

Requirements
- Must have a degree in Business, Marketing, Statistics, Economics or related field
- At least 2 years working with relational decision-support databases (preferably a data warehousing environment), along with demonstrated quantitative skills
- Strong experience with SAS and SQL
- Must be able to prioritize and handle multiple projects
- Must be able to communicate technical information to non-technical audiences
- Must be able to work with minimal supervision

Business Objects/SAS Analysts

Job summary
- Performs periodic updates on Business Objects Web Intelligence data
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- Provides analytical support on data issue researches

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- Must have a degree in Business, Marketing, Statistics, Economics, Computer Science or any related field
- At least 2 years working with relational decision-support databases (preferably a data warehousing environment), along with demonstrated quantitative skills
- Strong experience with SAS, SQL and Business Objects
- Must be able to prioritize and handle multiple projects
- Must have good communication skills
- Must be able to work with minimal supervision

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- support the formulation and approval of results-based Barangay Action Plans in each of the 240 selected disadvantaged barangays
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Selection Criteria
- university degree (minimum master level) in social sciences with strong emphasis on planning and participative methods
- minimum of 5 years of work experience in a relevant field and preferably in community development, planning (RBM) & monitoring
- good knowledge of Results based management and Human rights based programming is necessary
- good knowledge of participative techniques is also a must

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e-mail: gpfernandez@unicef.org

Applications from qualified women are encouraged. We only reply to shortlisted candidates. Previous applicants need not send their applications. UNICEF is a non-smoking environment.

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The ten most outstanding members of the workforce of the Subic Bay Freeport Zone

Editha B. Geniza, Ph.D.HRM and Roel B. Dimalanta, MEA, MHRM

THE SUBIC BAY Workforce Development Foundation, Inc. The Subic Bay Workforce Development Foundation, Inc. (SBWDFI) in cooperation with the SBMA Labor Center just concluded its Search for the Ten Most Outstanding Members of the Workforce of the Subic Bay Freeport Zone 2006 on Nov. 22, 2006.

Founded six years ago, the Foundation in the exercise of its powers and fulfillment of its functions, is guided by the following objectives:

1. to promote cooperation and coordination on workforce development among the different entities, public or private, operating within and/or having interest in the Subic Bay Freeport Zone;
2. to harness the resulting synergy from the efficient cooperation and coordination of the said entities towards purposes beneficial to all;
3. to fully develop and utilize the potential of the labor force available within the SBFZ;
4. to strike a balance between the interest of labor and management with the end-view of attaining industrial peace.

The great men and women of the Foundation for 2006 include: President: Lawyer Severo C. Pastor, Jr.(Head, SBMA Labor Center); Vice-president: Peter Tumanda, Subic Bay Chamber of Commerce; Secretary: Editha B. Geniza, Ph.D.(President, PMAP Subic Bay); Treasurer: Merlin De Gracia (Subic Bay Satellite); Auditor: Deo Amog (FedEx); PRO: Rommel Aquino (SBMA Labor Center); Directors: Michael Henry Williams (Polar Marine); Margie Wong (NIDEC); Daisy Prinsesa (SBMA Labor Center); Dorotea Varela (SBMA Labor Center); Rey Portugal (Taian Manufacturing, Inc.); Mary Joy Lee (Koryo, Subic – LMC Representative)

The Search. One of the projects of the Foundation is the Search for the Ten Most Outstanding Members of the Workforce of Subic Bay Freeport Zone which aims to recognize the culture of excellence and customer service among the Freeport employees.

For the past five years, the Foundation has trained the spotlight on the most outstanding employees in the manufacturing, tourism, academe, I.T., utilities, and other sectors of business and industry in the Freeport.

Criteria for selection revolved around the nominee's contribution to the following areas:

1. provision of excellent client / customer service;
2. excellent performance in a project or similar undertaking;
3. personal dedication and commitment to the nominee's workplace;
4. personal dedication and commitment to the Freeport's culture, social spirit and strategic directions;
5. innovative ideas and concept; and
6. exceptional leadership.

The Board of judges for this year's search is composed of:

Chairperson: Lawyer Emerico de Guzman, President, PMAP National

Members: Lina Aseneta, IPP PMAP and Chairperson, Committee on Chapters

Aris L. Limos, Admin Supervisor, Values Formation School, PNP

Leonila L. Baluyot, Chief, Business Development Division, DTI

Dr. Roger L. Nuqui, Education Supervisor/OIC Kalalake High School

They remarked that "choosing the best among the best is not an easy task". As enunciated by one of the greatest achievers of his time H.W. Longfellow—"The heights by great men reached and kept, were not attained by sudden flight, but they, while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night. Unless a man undertakes more than he possibly can do, he will never do all that he can."

Awards Night 2006. The Subic Bay Workforce Development Foundation, Incorporated in cooperation with the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority Labor Center thru Lawyer Severo C. Pastor genially welcomed some 650 witnesses to the 5th Awarding Ceremonies of the Subic Bay Freeport Zone's Ten Most Outstanding Members of the Workforce at the Subic Bay Arts Center, SBFZ.

SBMA Chairman and Head of Agency, Commodore Feliciano G. Salonga, SBMA Administrator and CEO, Honorable Armand C. Arreza, and Immediate Past President of PMAP and Chairperson, Committee on Chapters, Lina Aseneta graced the occasion. They were one in saying that the Filipino worker is excellent, hardworking and stands out any where in the world.

The host of the night's celebration of triumph and achievements, Edgar G. Geniza, president, Mondriaan Aura College quoted Calvin Coolidge, Former U.S. President that "No person was ever honored for what he received; honor has been the reward for what he gave."

Each of the awardees received a Plaque of Recognition, gift certificate, cash award, gifts and a Guyito donated by the Philippine Daily Inquirer thru Jesse Rebustillo, head of the Classified Ads Section which symbolized the hardwork of the working class.

The awardees. The Ten Most Outstanding Members of the Workforce of SBFZ were honored for the contributions they have given to their workplace, to the Freeport, to themselves, to their co-workers, to the environment, and to the significant others. The following show the highlights of their achievements among the other excellent attributes they have exhibited:

1. Mariano R. Musngi of Subic Water is the head of Technical Services Division, distribution Network Management Department who handles the operation and maintenance of the water pipeline network and the sewerage system in the Subic Bay Freeport Zone Area. As a manifestation of his excellent performance, Musngi ensures the continued and uninterrupted water supply of all the locators and residential areas in the Freeport and in Olongapo City. As a committed employee, he can easily be called back whenever emergency breakdowns happen on the water system operation, at whatever time of the day. He has always been willing to extend long hours of service. Aside from the excellent service and performance he is rendering to Subic Water, he is constantly participating in SBMA'S River Clean –up not only by himself but with his family

2. Annabelle Martin an employee of Wistron Infocom Philippines Corporation has the following accomplishments: increased productivity through monitoring of process and skills of the operator; a record high output in WPH as a bench marker on computer company. She is indeed an epitome of loyal service for having stayed in Wistron for 8 long years and she has shown eagerness to strive more for the company and her professional growth.

3. Loyalty, commitment, sincerity, honesty; competence and excellent human relations and leadership skills—these are the qualities of Richard John De Perio. Indeed, he is a distinct asset to Koryo Subic, Inc. He exemplifies exceptional and strong leadership. Being the very first employee in the Company, he eventually ascended to higher position because of his exemplary work performance. For the last ten (10) years in the Company, he has performed various delegated functions to the delight and satisfaction of the Company, hence just recently, he was bestowed Level 7a Post as a Molding Section Head with a designation of Company's Jr. Manager. In addition to this, he has never incurred sick leaves in 1999 to 2000 and in 2005 to 2006, hence he has become twice a recipient of Health Bonus Award. He has never stopped harvesting what he conscientiously planted in the Company by being a recipient of some of the most coveted recognitions in the Company which included— 5-Year Service Award; 10-Year Service Award and just recently he received the 2005 KSI Employee of the Year, the highest recognition of loyalty, efficiency and commitment given to an employee.

4. Raphael "Raf" Lugod holds the position of manager, Zoological Exhibits of Ocean Adventure. He joined the employ of his company in April 2002. Things did not come easy for this awardee. His Visayan culture and his inability to speak Tagalog was among his daunting encounters when he moved in to Subic Bay. Given his language limitation, he showed an exceptional dedication to his job especially in the area of customer care and satisfaction. His excellent personal disposition, prudence, maturity, team play, and self-confidence helped him gain strings of promotions. One of his visions is to maintain if not improve the status of SBMA as a premier showcase of wildlife and environmental conservation in spite of the industrial development within the Freeport.

5. Efficiency, honesty, friendliness and enthusiasm describe Noemi Ong. She is pleasant in her contacts with clients and visitors; she is neat and attractive in her appearance. Her ascending to higher position and her excellent handling of people made Koryo Subic management confident of her leadership potentials. Her consistent excellent work performance appraisals are truly reflective of her conscientious work and strong leadership. She encourages maximum individual participation. She persuades workers in supporting Company policies and in cooperating in the achievement of Company's goals and objectives.

6. Bronson G. Mabulay is from Wistron Infocom Philippines Corporation. He has been designated as a Supervisor under the Failure Analysis Engineering Section. And as such, he never runs out of ideas in contributing to the improvement of his section and Wistron as a whole by initiating the following projects—1. Implementation of a system in FAE section that daily tracks down and reports all issues detected in the production lines 2. Conceptualization and creation of data bases that contribute to cost-saving catering to Ball Grid Array chipset component issues. His current project undertakings include—Office Automation Personal Upgrade.

7. Bianca Christiane G. Espinos is another employee from Ocean Adventure. She is one of the pioneering employees of this Company. With diligent work performance, she has achieved several promotions and has established herself as a distinguished and respectable leader of her department. As an employee, she has displayed outstanding work output, admirable leadership skills, and inspiring commitment to protect our marine mammal resources. With her dedication and commitment in preserving the lives of marine mammals, she has been actively participating in various seminars and workshops with such mission.

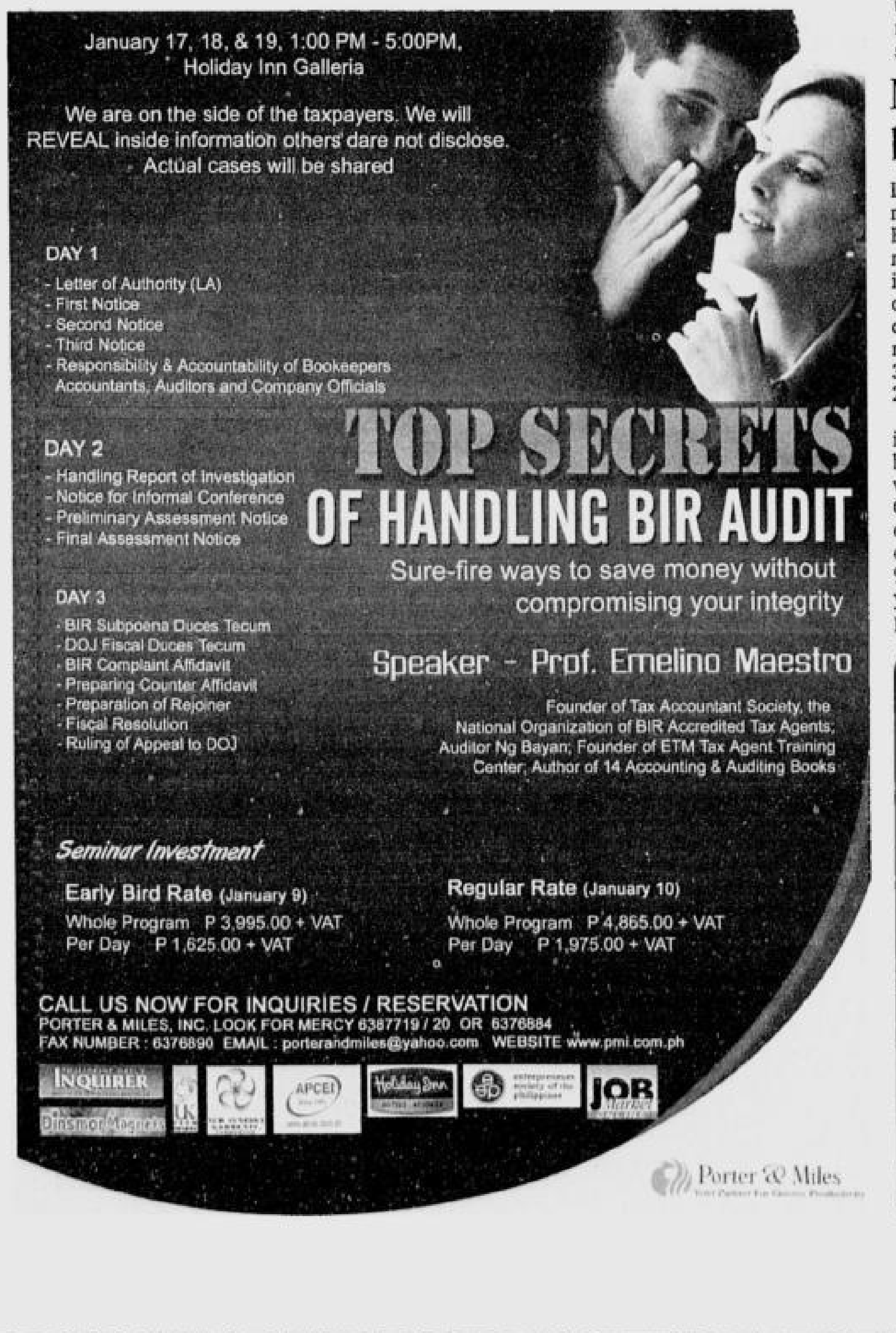
8. Thomas Eirween A. Davis has been with Mondriaan Aura College for 3 years as a full-time instructor apart from working for 5 years as a part-timer. Life has not been easy for Davis but this did not hinder him from climbing up the ladder of success. His sheer determination and love for his work made him outstanding. His achievements include Best School Organization Adviser handling Mondriaan Aura Business Club; he was able to generate 800-dollar funding from Hongkong Shanghai Banking through the Student in Free Enterprise—SIFE International. He is also the adviser of JPMAP. He was also able to formulate and implement community and school- based entrepreneurship programs and facilitated relevant seminars and training.

9. In the words of her own father—Every time you go one step higher up the ladder of success you should go one step lower in the way you deal with the people around you. This has become the guiding principle of Roma S. Salvador, teacher at Mondriaan Aura College. She spends quality time with her students inside and outside the school room making sure that she imparts proper values to her students. She guides and motivates her students on proper human relations, respect for authorities, right conduct, and leadership. Part of her self-imposed obligation is to, in every way possible, contribute in furthering the ideals of education for liberation - the vision by which Mondriaan Aura College stands for. Her tender loving care made her well-loved as well.

10. Awarded as the Most Outstanding Adviser of the Student Organization for two (2) consecutive years, Leo Eusantos is indeed an icon of exemplary performance. He entered into the employ of Mondriaan Aura College in June 2003 after completing his course in BS-Psychology and became a full time instructor in 2004. He was able to prove his worth by being a recipient of other numerous awards in school which included letter of commendation for excellent teaching service. He has rendered his service as a volunteer coordinator for the opening of South East Asian Games in Subic. He was a part of a strong team who responded to the Mudslide tragedy in Leyte as a volunteer Psychologist and Counselor. He is also a volunteer Psychologist of Helping Hands and Healing Hearts Ministries of the Phils. As a teacher, he has employed a unique approach in the areas of student learning as well as in the area of human development, combining both the cognitive abilities with human faculties in learning and development. Eusantos has a unique style of incorporating knowledge-based education with the realities for the course's enhancement and acquisitions.

A Tribute: Employees... Laborers... Helpers... Workers... However you are called... we have our unwavering belief and faith that you have the most special and significant roles in moving the wheel of our industry... That through your selfless commitment and devotion to your respective jobs, our economy survives... our country develops. While you may consider yourselves as the most exploited group... the most abused sector of our society, your contributions to our society are truly unparalleled. Accept This Humble Tribute of recognition that we offer you... The 2006 Most Outstanding Freeport Workforce award is indeed A bare symbol of our everlasting gratitude and love for you. You truly deserve to be commended for all your hardwork and perseverance. Indeed you are the unsung heroes of our industry. God bless you as you continue to travel the road to greatness!

Mabuhay ka bayaning Manggagawa ng Subic Bay Freeport Zone!



January 17, 18, & 19, 1:00 PM - 5:00PM,
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- First Notice
- Second Notice
- Third Notice
- Responsibility & Accountability of Bookeepers Accountants, Auditors and Company Officials

DAY 2
- Handling Report of Investigation
- Notice for Informal Conference
- Preliminary Assessment Notice
- Final Assessment Notice

DAY 3
- BIR Subpoena Duces Tecum
- DOJ Fiscal Duces Tecum
- BIR Complaint Affidavit
- Preparing Counter Affidavit
- Preparation of Rejoiner
- Fiscal Resolution
- Ruling of Appeal to DOJ

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Nationwide employment up by 310,000 in October '06

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT Secretary Arturo D. Brion bared that employment nationwide rose by 310,000, increasing the total number of employed persons in the country's economy to 33.185 million in Oct. 2006, from 32.875 million in October 2005.

Brion stated that the growth in nationwide employment, as based on the Labor Force Survey of the National Statistics Office, increased the nationwide employment rate to 92.7 percent in October this year from 92.6 percent in October last year, and decreased the unemployment rate to 7.3 percent from 7.4 percent.

The Labor Chief also noted that the gains in local employment are complemented by the robust growth in overseas employment; the global deployment of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) has now surpassed the 1-million mark in more than 190 host economies worldwide.

Brion cited the earlier report of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration that the total global OFW deployment figure rose by 12.4 percent from 930,631 in the same period last year, to 1,046,388 from January 1 to December 5 this year.

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FINALLY, A WORKSHOP THAT will reveal inside information on sure-fire ways to save money without compromising integrity. Don't miss this very important event slated on Jan. 17, 18, and 19, 1–5 p.m. at Holiday Inn Galleria Manila, Ortigas. CPE Credits will be given to CPA's.

Topics include Day 1: Letter of Authority; First, Second and Third Notice; Responsibility of Bookkeepers, Accountants. Auditors and Company Officers; Day 2: Handling of Report of investigation; Notice for Informal Conference; Preliminary and Final Assessment Notice; Day 3: BIR Subpoena Duces Tecum; DOJ Fiscal Duces Tecum; Preparing Counter Affidavit; Prepareation of Rejoinder; Fiscal Resolution; Ruling of Appeal to DOJ; etc. Registering for one day only is allowed, but people are encouraged to attend the whole program.

This seminar is sponsored by Porter and Miles Inc, a premier training company. For more information or reservation, please call Mercy at 638-7719/20. Hurry! Call us now while there are still seats available.

National sales rally set

START THE YEAR 2007 WITH a bang! Don't miss the National Sales Rally dubbed as Exsellence Part 2–Conquering an Enemy called Average slated on Jan. 26, 2007 at the Holiday Inn Galleria.

Distinguished speakers include Mr. Cecilio Pedro, president and CEO of Lamoiyan Corp., Mr. Donald Lim, CEO of Yehey.com and president of Philippine Marketing Association; Mr. Jos Ortega, chair and CEO of Brandlab, Mr. Jesse Rebustillo, head of Classified Ads Division of Philippine Daily Inquirer; Mr. John Mangun, managing director of Aranca Research Phils. Inc.; and Rene Espinosa, managing director of Porter & Miles Inc.

The topics include The Selling Games; Inspiring Stories of the World's Greatest Athletes; Selling not just to Win But to Break Records; 10 Record-Breaking Techniques, Internet Marketing Magic, 6 Power Sources in Sales Negotiation, 7 Sales Negotiation Techniques, Quick Tips of Handling Price Objections, Clinch that Sale!

This national event is slated on Jan. 26, 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Galleria. It is organized by Porter and Miles Inc, a premier training company on business, management, marketing, sales and human resource development, with office address at Suite 2502-C Tektite Tower East, Ortigas Center. You may call Mercy at 638-7719/20 for more information/registration.

Jumpstart your new year. Recharge the batteries of your people and see them increase their sales. Sponsors for the National Sales Rally include the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Job Market, Business Mirror, Jobstreet.com, Holiday Inn Galleria, Avon, Yehey.com, Citibank, Disnmor Magnets, INQ7.net, Entreprenuers Society of the Philippines, New Synergy Garments, APCEI and UKDERM Pharma.

International Finance Corporation
World Bank Group

The International Finance Corporation, the private sector arm of the World Bank, has established a technical assistance program for Small and Medium Enterprises in the Philippines (PEP Philippines). PEP Philippines, with contributions from other bilateral and multi-lateral donors, has offices in Manila and Davao, Mindanao. The program has a mandate to provide technical assistance to support the development of small and medium enterprises, particularly in Mindanao, initially in three key areas: access to finance, agribusiness linkages and business enabling environment.

PEP Philippines is currently seeking for Short Term Consultants for Sustainable Business Practices

Scope of the job: Using PEP-Philippines' recently developed Sustainability Guidelines the consultant will review a number of our programs in order to ascertain the Environmental, Gender, Stakeholder engagement as well as Peace and Conflict issues inherent in these programs. In particular this work will highlight what risks and opportunities there might be in these programs and develop plans to respectively mitigate or leverage these issues. Some of these programs are at or are close to the implementation stage. Some will still be at the concept stage. Input from the consultant will be required to provide guidance on what issues the latter programs might encounter as well.

The consultant will undertake specific project related work to help to develop the specific sustainability activities within the program. This may include developing environmental finance initiatives and promoting gender equality. The consultant will also work with PEP-Philippines partners to ensure sharing of international experience and best practice, providing opportunities to improve our products and practices. In addition to the deliverables listed below the consultant may be asked to perform ad hoc tasks at the discretion of the Country Coordinator.

Qualifications and Position Requirements:

- Extensive knowledge of EHS, gender issues, corporate citizenship internationally and in the Philippines;
- Knowledge of banking and finance an advantage;
- Experience of providing design recommendations for donor-funded organizations;
- Good networks and contacts with the Philippine public and private sectors and an understanding of the needs of SMEs in particular; and,
- Track record of producing high quality written work.

Submission of Interest

Interested candidates should submit their resumes and expected daily remuneration by email to Will Beloe (wbeloe@IFC.ORG) no later than c.o.b. Tuesday, January 9th 2007. For corporate information, please visit www.ifc.org. You may email William Beloe for complete terms of reference.

Only email submissions will be considered.

MURAMOTO AUDIO-VISUAL PHILIPPINES, INC.

A fast growing Japanese company at Mactan Economic Zone, Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu is in need of:

INTERNAL QUALITY AUDITOR

- Must have knowledge of the type of work for at least three (3) years
- Must complete an internal auditor training course
- Must have vast understanding on each requirement in ISO 9001-2000 standards
- Must have firm knowledge of the quality management system
- Must have the determination to achieve the audit objective and to deal with difficult issues and situations that emerge in the course of audits
- Must be able to work effectively with team members

MANAGER

- Male or Female, 30 years old and above
- Should originally be from Cebu or Visayas
- Preferably with exemplary communication and leadership skills
- Able to speak and understand Cebuano
- Preferably with experience in a Japanese oriented company

Interested Applicants may send or e-mail their Application Letter, Resumé w/ 2x2 Photo to:

The HRD Manager
Muramoto Audio Visual Phils. Inc.
Mepz I, Barangay Ibo Lapu-Lapu City

Email:
hrd_section@yahoo.com

Labor attaches to meet in Manila to strengthen programs, services for OFWs

PHILIPPINE LABOR OFFICIALS IN nations hosting overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) will convene shortly before the year ends to strengthen the country's overseas employment program and the delivery of welfare services to the OFWs and their families.

Labor and Employment Secretary Arturo D. Brion said that labor attaches from Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLOs) will hold a five-day conference in Tagaytay on Dec. 27 and 28, 2006 and then in Manila on January 3, 4, and 5 next year.

Brion said that the labor attaches manning the POLOs will address issues and challenges affecting the country's overseas employment and welfare programs for the OFWs in a bid to come up with a convergent system of service delivery and also an improved national reintegration plan for returning OFWs and their dependents.

The labor chief said that the conduct of the POLO conference underscores the important role that POLOs play in the lives of OFWs onsite. He cited the recent events in Lebanon and Kazakhstan which saw the heroic involvement of POLOs in the evacuation and repatriation of affected OFWs.

"The events in Lebanon and Kazakhstan drew heightened focus on the crucial role of POLOs in global labor affairs," Brion said.

He added that the role of the POLOs has become even more important in the face of continually changing labor markets brought about by increasing flow of irregular migrants, restrictive immigration policies of host countries, and other issues affecting the employment and welfare of OFWs abroad.

Brion stressed that the labor attaches will formulate regional overseas action plans during the conference to address the issues and subsequently enhance their delivery of welfare services to the OFWs onsite and improve their capability to develop markets with employment opportunities especially for professional and highly skilled OFWs.

He said that the labor attaches will share experiences and best practices in market development and also in conciliation and mediation and in building partnerships and bilateral/multilateral agreements with labor receiving nations and other migration stakeholders.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

TECHNICAL OPERATIONS DIVISION

Sr. Database Administrator | Database Administrator
Sr. Systems Administrator | Systems Administrator
Sr. Computer Operator | Computer Operator
Shift Supervisor

General Qualifications

- Graduate of at least 4-yr. course (preferable Bachelor of Science Degree holder of any computer/engineering related course)
- At least 3 yrs prof. experience in the operations of Open Systems environments
- Strong analytical, problem solving, and conceptual skills
- Willing to be assigned on shifting schedule
- With good communication (verbal/written) and interpersonal skills

Technical Qualifications

Database Administrator/Senior Database Administrator

- In-depth knowledge in database design, management and performance tuning
- Experience in T-SQL and programming stored procedure, triggers, functions
- Experience in Oracle/MS SQL 2000 on Windows or Unix/Solaris/HP-UX systems administration

Systems Administrator/Senior Systems Administrator

- At least 3 yrs experience in MS Windows 2000/2003/Sun Solaris 9 0/Unix systems administration
- With hardware/software diagnostic and troubleshooting skills (IBM, HP, Dell, Fujitsu & Nortel)
- Strong experience in system management tools and client/server environments
- Web server management experience a plus

Shift Supervisor

- With good knowledge of concepts, practices, and procedures in computer operations, performance measurements, job scheduling and troubleshooting techniques

NETWORK MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Datacom Engineer | Network Engineer
Desktop Support Engineer | Project Specialist

Minimum Qualifications

Datacom Engineer

- BS Engineering (ECE or EE) or Computer Science Graduate
- Experience in data communication and client server networks
- Familiar with Ethernet, ATM, frame-relay and IP-VPN
- Knowledge of IPX, SNA, SNMP and TCP/IP Protocols
- Familiar with FRAD, modems, routers, concentrators, and switches
- Solid understanding of IP addressing schemes

Network Engineer

- BS Engineering (ECE or EE) or Computer Science Graduate
- Experience in data communication and client server networks.
- Knowledge of Cisco IOS and IP addressing schemes
- Knowledge of the following protocols BGP, OSPF, IGRP, EIGRP, IP, IPX, SNA, SNMP) and LAN/WAN technologies
- Familiar with FRAD, modems routers, concentrators, and switches
- Knowledge of computer/network systems infrastructure requirements and standards

Desktop Support Engineer

- BS Engineering (ECE or EE) or Computer Science Graduate
- Experience in variety of hardware platforms running Windows Operating Systems
- Familiar with remote access / VPN and backup / recovery
- Knowledge of computer security systems, applications, procedures and techniques
- Experience in using Office productivity tolls like MS Office, etc.

Project Specialist

- BS Engineering (ECE or EE) or Computer Science Graduate
- Knowledge of computer/network systems infrastructure requirements and standards
- Knowledge of computer security systems, applications, procedures and techniques
- Experience in project management and handling of multiple projects
- Experience in using Office productivity tolls like MS Office, etc.

INFORMATION SECURITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Production Analyst | Security and Quality Assurance Analyst | System Architect | Information Security Officer

Minimum Qualifications

Production Analyst

- Must have good understanding of SDLC. Experience in change management, production processing, performance measurements, job scheduling

System Architect

- Must be familiar with IT design architectural models, design methodologies and industry best practices

Security and Quality Assurance Analyst

- Must have a good working knowledge in defining, maintaining, improving standard processes to ensure the high quality of product releases

Information Security Officer

- Must know how to coordinate engineering, operations and security functions at the enterprise level; monitor various sources to identify significant threats and vulnerabilities

SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Project Manager | Systems Analyst/Programmer
Programmer

Minimum Qualifications

- Graduate of a 4-yr course (preferably Bachelor of Science Degree Holder of any computer related course)
- Must have professional experience in System Analysis & Design and Application Development for Open Systems (ASP, ASP.net, VB.net, MS SQL Server, Oracle, Java)
- Must have knowledge of System Development Life Cycle (SDLC) and best practices

Please send your Application Letter (indicating desired position), Resume with 2x2 photo and School Transcript of Records to:

OEVP Global Technology Sector Philippine National Bank
2/F PNB Financial Center, Pres. Diosdado Macapagal Blvd.
Pasay City 1300

www.pnb.com.ph

PNB

WANTED IMMEDIATELY

PURCHASING MANAGER

For a chain of grocery stores

- ☐ Not more than thirty-five (35) years old
- ☐ Male or Female
- ☐ Must have finished four years of college education preferably in an Accounting course
- ☐ Must have at least two (2) years experience along the same or similar line of work

BUYER

- ☐ Not more than thirty (30) years old
- ☐ Male or Female
- ☐ Must have finished a four year college course preferably in Management or Accounting
- ☐ Must have at least one (1) year experience in the same or related line of work

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER

- ☐ Not more than thirty (30) years old
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Must have finished a four year college course in Psychology or Accounting
- ☐ Must have at least one (1) year experience in the same or related line of work

All applicants must have pleasing personality and hardworking who are ready to work even during holidays

Please send letter of application and comprehensive resumé with 2x2 ID photo to:

Personnel Department
1238 EDSA Balintawak, Quezon City
Tel. No. 362-6017 / 330-2759
Email: supergrocersinc@yahoo.com

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Interested applicants may call and send their comprehensive resumé with 2x2 colored picture to:

Ms. Rose Alfonso, HR Manager
at Tel. No. (047) 252-1811/(047) 252-1812

---

100 Years

Baguio Country Club Corporation
invites applicants to fill the position of:

RESIDENT MANAGER

Applicants must be in possession of the following characteristics:

- At least 10-12 years of work experience in the Hospitality Industry
- With Managerial Experience and strong background working in the Food and Beverage Department of a Deluxe Hotel
- Preferably at least 30 years old
- Not necessarily a resident of Baguio City
- Applicants with International training and experience are preferred

Qualified applicants will be contacted immediately by phone for initial screening which may be followed by an invitation to the Club for further screening by the General Manager. This opening will be made available to all applicants until January 30, 2007.

The Baguio Country Club Corporation does not discriminate. Applicants of both genders are welcome to apply.

Interested Applicants may send their Curriculum Vitaé
with a 2x2 copy of their latest ID picture addressed to the
Asst. Human Resources Manager,
Human Resources Division
of the
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB CORPORATION
at the following contact information:
BaguioCountryClubHR@gmail.com
or
PO Box 8, South Drive, Baguio City 2600

LAWYERS ACCOUNTANTS & BUSINESS GRADUATES

With science background preferably.

Recent graduates are welcome.
To work in Biotech office in Makati.
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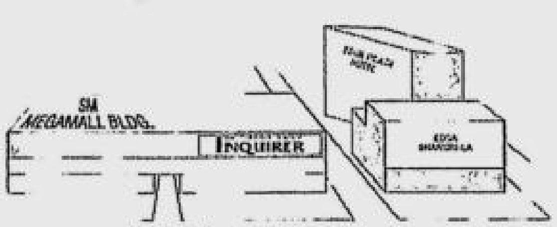

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When the resumé is not to be believed

IN THE PAST FEW YEARS, THE reputations of resumés were at stake as the so-called University of Recto emerges. Designing an attractive resumes is very possible by putting false data to make it more impressive. Data on it are usually supported by fake documents and certifications. These documents could be acquired at a small stall or even a desk along Recto. Recto has been known for its character of making fib certifications not only pertaining to resumes but for some other legal documents. The desperate applicants in finding job grab the opportunity to avail of fake attachments to support their resume. They are the people who claim to have graduated from reputable schools or to have a master's degree, which in fact they do not. They would claim have previously worked from competitive companies provided that they have fabricated certifications.

In this instance, employers could no longer identify the resumes that tells the truth and bears genuine and authenticated attachments, to those containing fictitious information.

Since the emergence of the University of Recto, this has been a cheating epidemic.

As computer age is concerned, many resumes are being submitted or sent thru online. It has greater chance to lie on it. Dr. Richard White, the director of the Rutgers office said on the article written by Robert Strauss entitled "When The Resume Is Not To Be Believed" published at New York Times on September 12, 2006, that this was partly an out-growth of the Internet age. He said employers should be especially wary of resumes that come in online, since it seems applicants are more willing to fib that way. As cited on the said article, in 2001, the head coach of Notre Dame Football so badly included on his resume a master's degree he did not have and a letters for playing football that he never earned; Ronald L. Zarrella, the Chief Executive of Bausch & Lomb, claimed to have had a Master's in Business Administration from New York University; and earlier this year, David J. Edmondson, the Chief Executive of RadioShack, was fired after a newspaper investigation showed that his resume was padded with two degrees in Psychology and Theology, degrees he never got from a university that was not even accredited. Notre Dame, Bausch & Lomb and RadioShack are huge organizations, and if they got fooled, at least at first, by resumes, how can small businesses, with fewer resources for checking, cope with what seems to be a cheating epidemic?

In our local employment status, many deployment agencies came in to this kind business. However, they tend to be lenient verifying and interviewing applicants before they deploy them to other firms. Thus, veracity of the resume could no longer be given much attention. Perhaps they have many things to check and other errands to fulfill.

One has to change this way. Before this cheating applicant could execute prevalent fraud in the company he is applying with, pre-employment precautions have to be done to stop it.

Truth Verifier Systems, Inc., awarded by the Philippine National Police as the Best Private Detective Agency launches its original and quality service offers of Pre-employment Background Verification and Pre-employment Lie Detection. Background Verification has been used by the best managed companies, while the Lie Detection is being used by the CIA, FBI and the Secret Service. In such ways, the resumes would be properly verified by means of manual verification or thru equipment, respectively. These methods would reassure if the resume speaks the truth. These have been of great help for decision-making without compromising the companies' usual routines. For inquiries please dial 634-7575 or 634-7573, or Fax No. 634-7569.

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SPEAKERS

Mr. Donald Lim
Chief Executive Officer
Yehey.com

Mr. Jos Ortega
Chairman and CEO
Brandlab

GUEST SPEAKER
Mr. Cecilio Pedro
President & CEO
Lamoiyan Corporation

Mr. Rene Espinosa
Managing Director
Porter & Miles, Inc

Mr. John Mangun
Managing Director
Aranca Research Phils., Inc.

Mr. Francis Jesse Rebustillo
Division Head for Classified Ads
Philippine Daily Inquirer

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BY LEVEL UP GAMES

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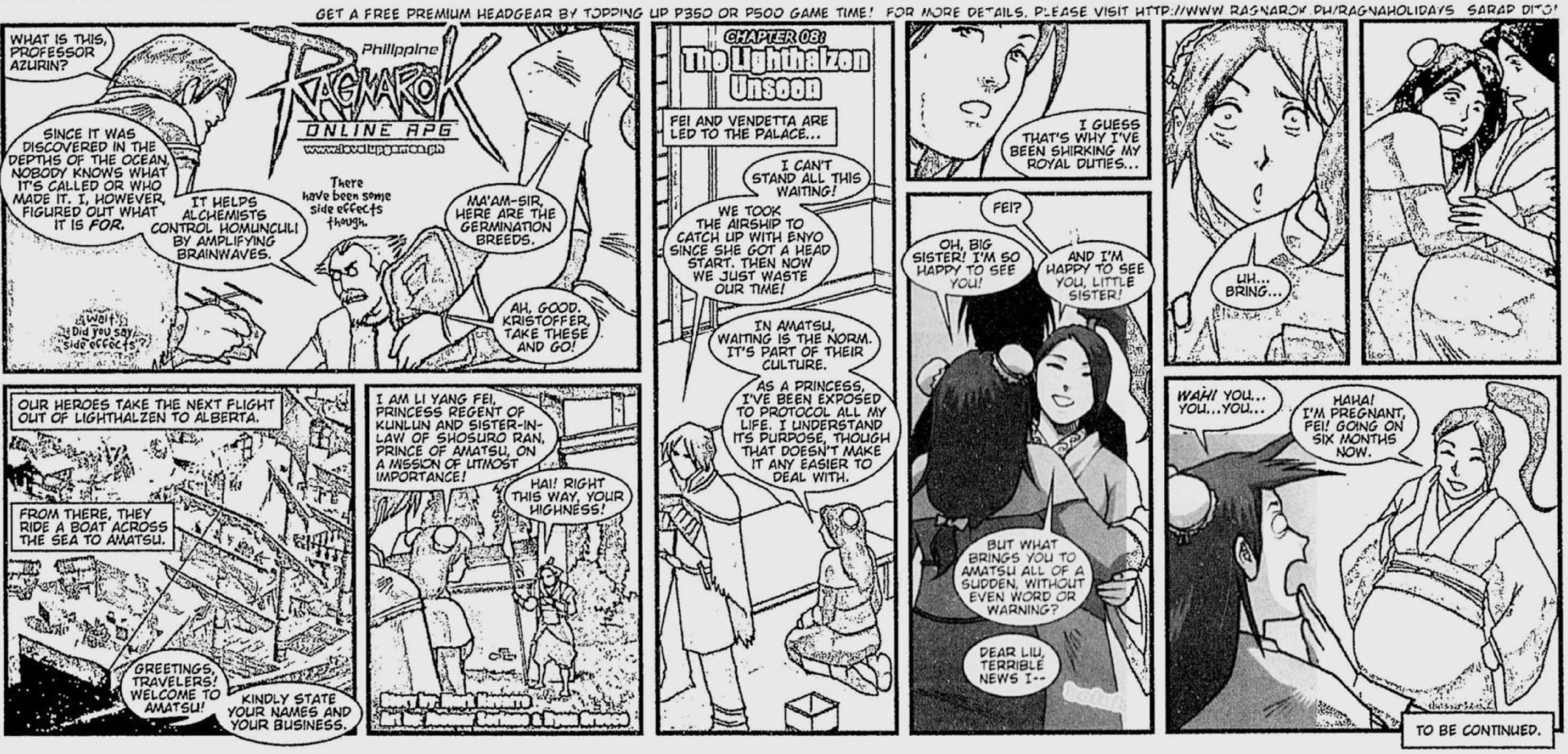
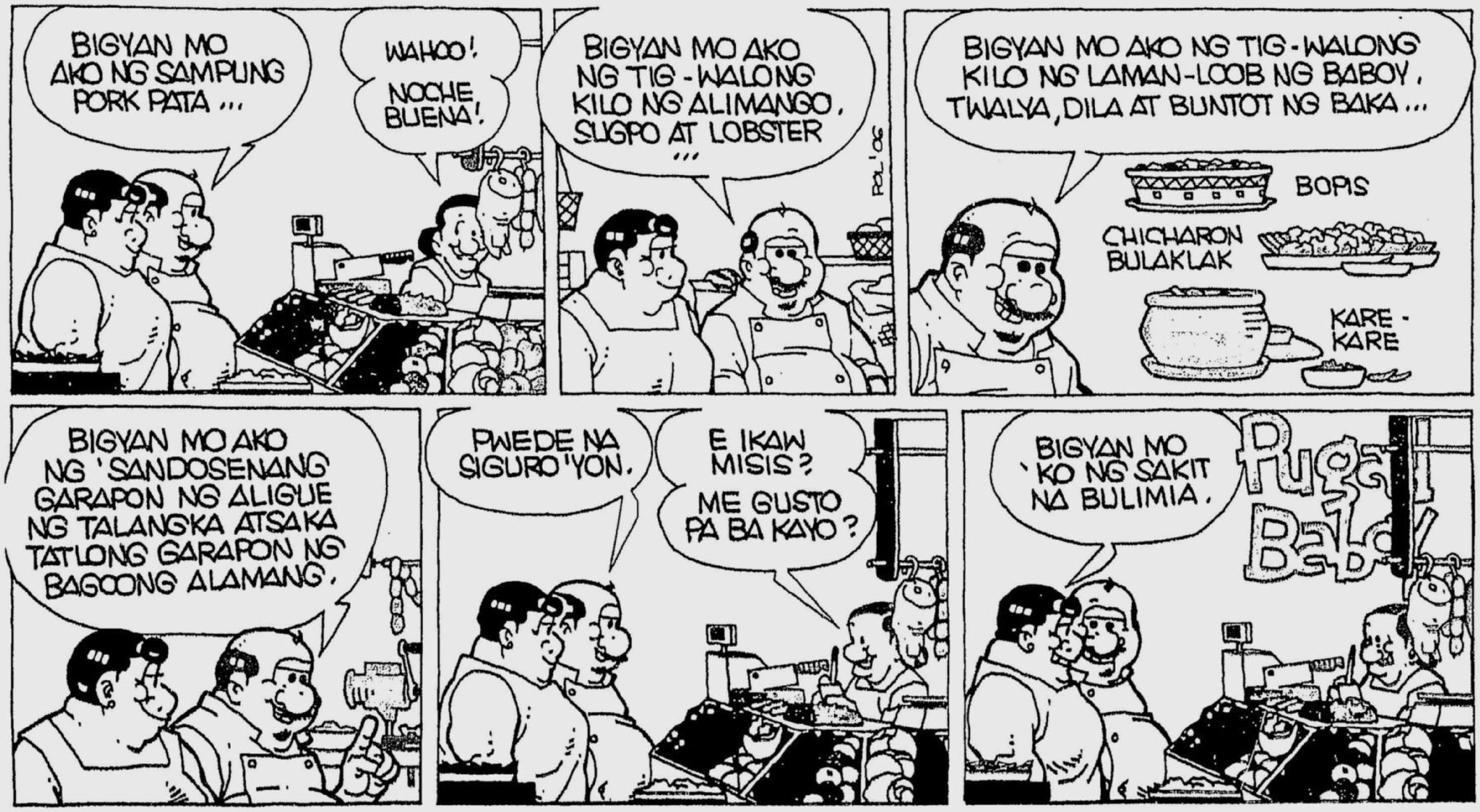

WHAT IS THIS, PROFESSOR AZURIN?
Philippine RAGNAROK ONLINE RPG www.levelupgames.ph
SINCE IT WAS DISCOVERED IN THE DEPTHS OF THE OCEAN, NOBODY KNOWS WHAT IT'S CALLED OR WHO MADE IT. I, HOWEVER, FIGURED OUT WHAT IT IS FOR.
IT HELPS ALCHEMISTS CONTROL HOMUNCULI BY AMPLIFYING BRAINWAVES.
There have been some side effects though.
MA'AM-SIR, HERE ARE THE GERMINATION BREEDS.
Wait. Did you say "side effects"?
AH, GOOD. KRISTOFFER, TAKE THESE AND GO!
OUR HEROES TAKE THE NEXT FLIGHT OUT OF LIGHTHALZEN TO ALBERTA.
FROM THERE, THEY RIDE A BOAT ACROSS THE SEA TO AMATSU.
GREETINGS, TRAVELERS! WELCOME TO AMATSU!
KINDLY STATE YOUR NAMES AND YOUR BUSINESS.
I AM LI YANG FEI, PRINCESS REGENT OF KUNLUN AND SISTER-IN-LAW OF SHOSURO RAN, PRINCE OF AMATSU, ON A MISSION OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE!
HAI! RIGHT THIS WAY, YOUR HIGHNESS!
CHAPTER 08: The Lighthalzen Unseen
FEI AND VENDETTA ARE LED TO THE PALACE...
I CAN'T STAND ALL THIS WAITING!
WE TOOK THE AIRSHIP TO CATCH UP WITH ENYO SINCE SHE GOT A HEAD START. THEN NOW WE JUST WASTE OUR TIME!
IN AMATSU, WAITING IS THE NORM. IT'S PART OF THEIR CULTURE.
AS A PRINCESS, I'VE BEEN EXPOSED TO PROTOCOL ALL MY LIFE. I UNDERSTAND ITS PURPOSE, THOUGH THAT DOESN'T MAKE IT ANY EASIER TO DEAL WITH.
I GUESS THAT'S WHY I'VE BEEN SHIRKING MY ROYAL DUTIES...
FEI?
OH, BIG SISTER! I'M SO HAPPY TO SEE YOU!
AND I'M HAPPY TO SEE YOU, LITTLE SISTER!
BUT WHAT BRINGS YOU TO AMATSU ALL OF A SUDDEN, WITHOUT EVEN WORD OR WARNING?
DEAR LIU, TERRIBLE NEWS I--
UH... BRING...
WAH! YOU... YOU...YOU...
HAHA! I'M PREGNANT, FEI! GOING ON SIX MONTHS NOW.
TO BE CONTINUED.

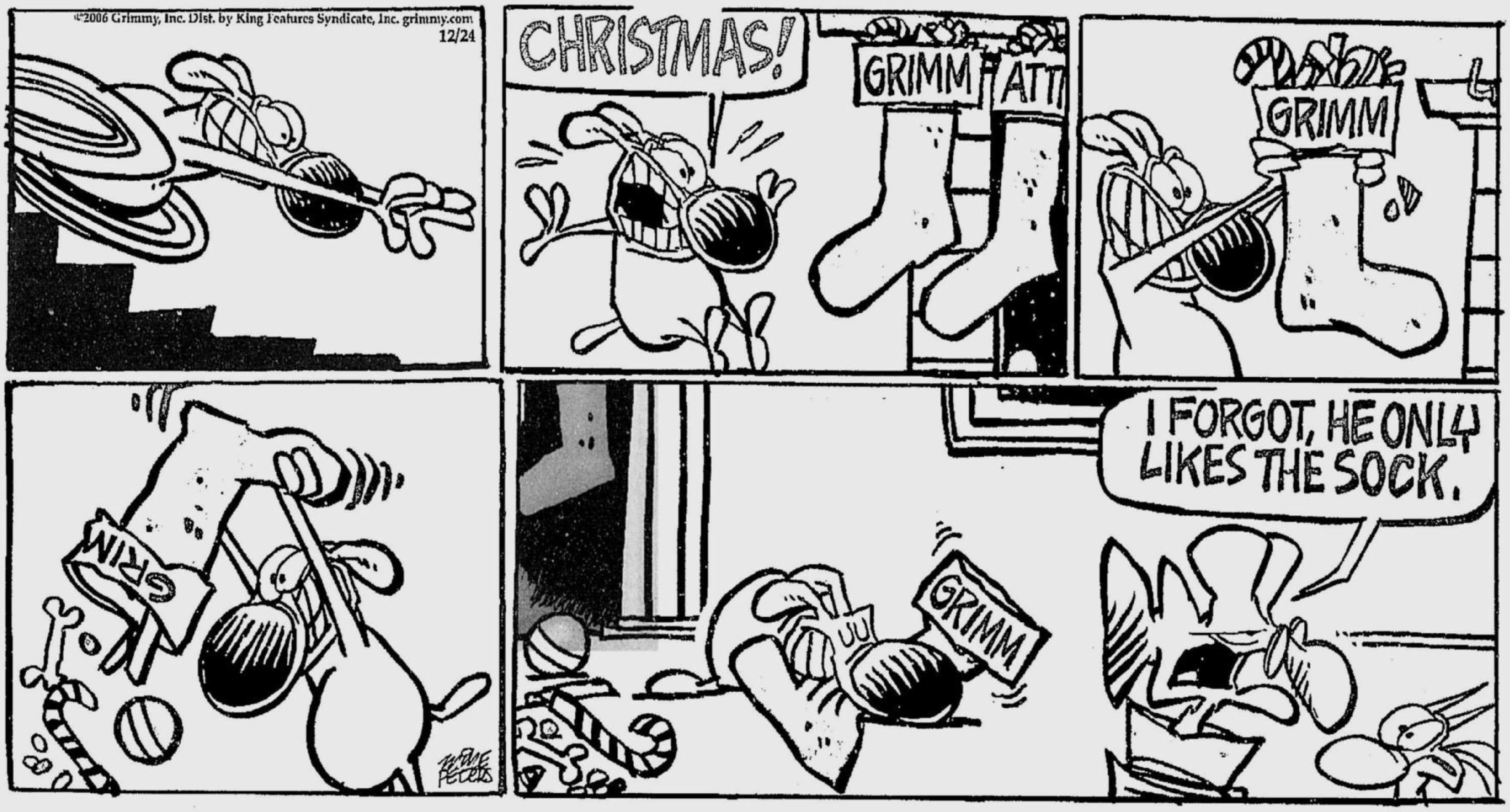
PUGAD BABOY

BY POL MEDINA JR.


BIGYAN MO AKO NG SAMPUNG PORK PATA ...
WAHOO! NOCHE BUENA!
BIGYAN MO AKO NG TIG-WALONG KILO NG ALIMANGO, SUGPO AT LOBSTER ...
POL '06
BIGYAN MO AKO NG TIG-WALONG KILO NG LAMAN-LOOB NG BABOY, TWALYA, DILA AT BUNTOT NG BAKA ...
BOPIS
CHICHARON BULAKLAK
KARE-KARE
BIGYAN MO AKO NG 'SANDOSENANG GARAPON NG ALIGUE NG TALANGKA ATSAKA TATLONG GARAPON NG BAGOONG ALAMANG.
PWEDE NA SIGURO 'YON.
E IKAW MISIS? ME GUSTO PA BA KAYO?
BIGYAN MO 'KO NG SAKIT NA BULIMIA.
Pugad Baboy

MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS



CHRISTMAS!
GRIMM
ATT
GRIMM
GRIM
GRIMM
I FORGOT, HE ONLY LIKES THE SOCK.
MIKE PETERS

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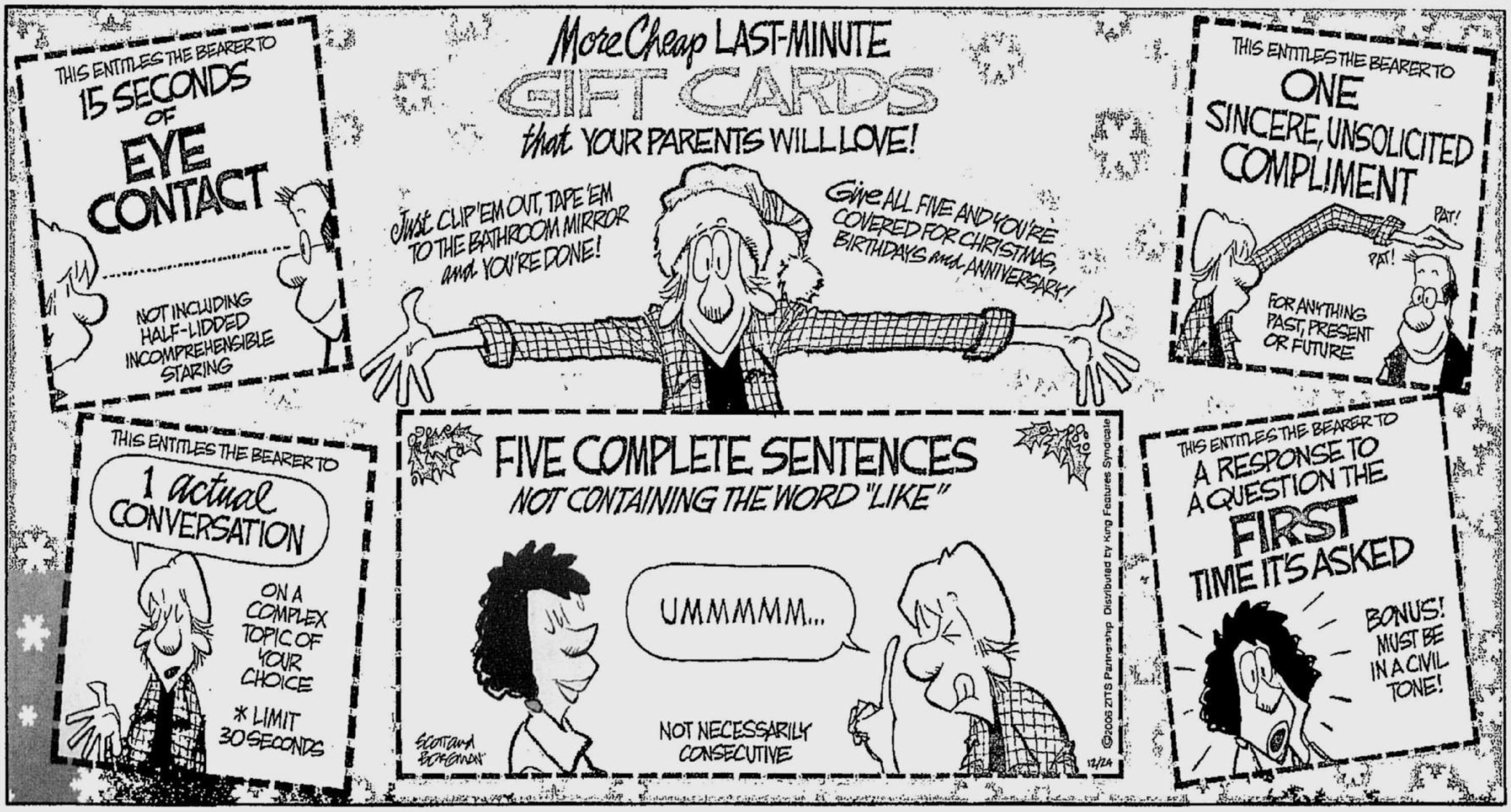
ZITS

BY JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



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Give ALL FIVE AND YOU'RE COVERED FOR CHRISTMAS, BIRTHDAYS and ANNIVERSARY!
THIS ENTITLES THE BEARER TO 15 SECONDS OF EYE CONTACT
NOT INCLUDING HALF-LIDDED INCOMPREHENSIBLE STARING
THIS ENTITLES THE BEARER TO ONE SINCERE, UNSOLICITED COMPLIMENT
PAT! PAT!
FOR ANYTHING PAST, PRESENT OR FUTURE
THIS ENTITLES THE BEARER TO 1 actual CONVERSATION
ON A COMPLEX TOPIC OF YOUR CHOICE
* LIMIT 30 SECONDS
FIVE COMPLETE SENTENCES NOT CONTAINING THE WORD "LIKE"
UMMMMM...
NOT NECESSARILY CONSECUTIVE
SCOTT and BORGMAN
THIS ENTITLES THE BEARER TO A RESPONSE TO A QUESTION THE FIRST TIME IT'S ASKED
BONUS! MUST BE IN A CIVIL TONE!

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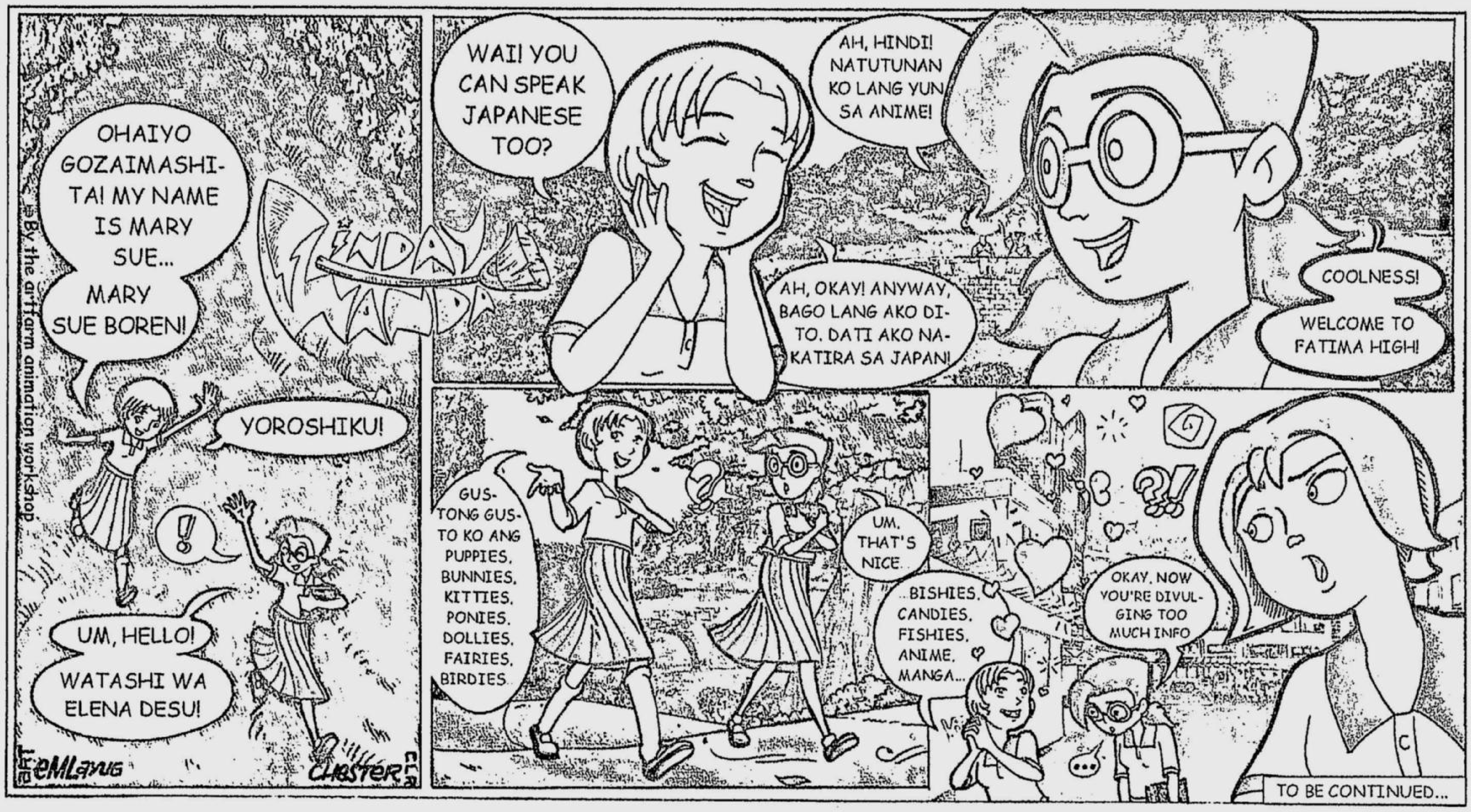
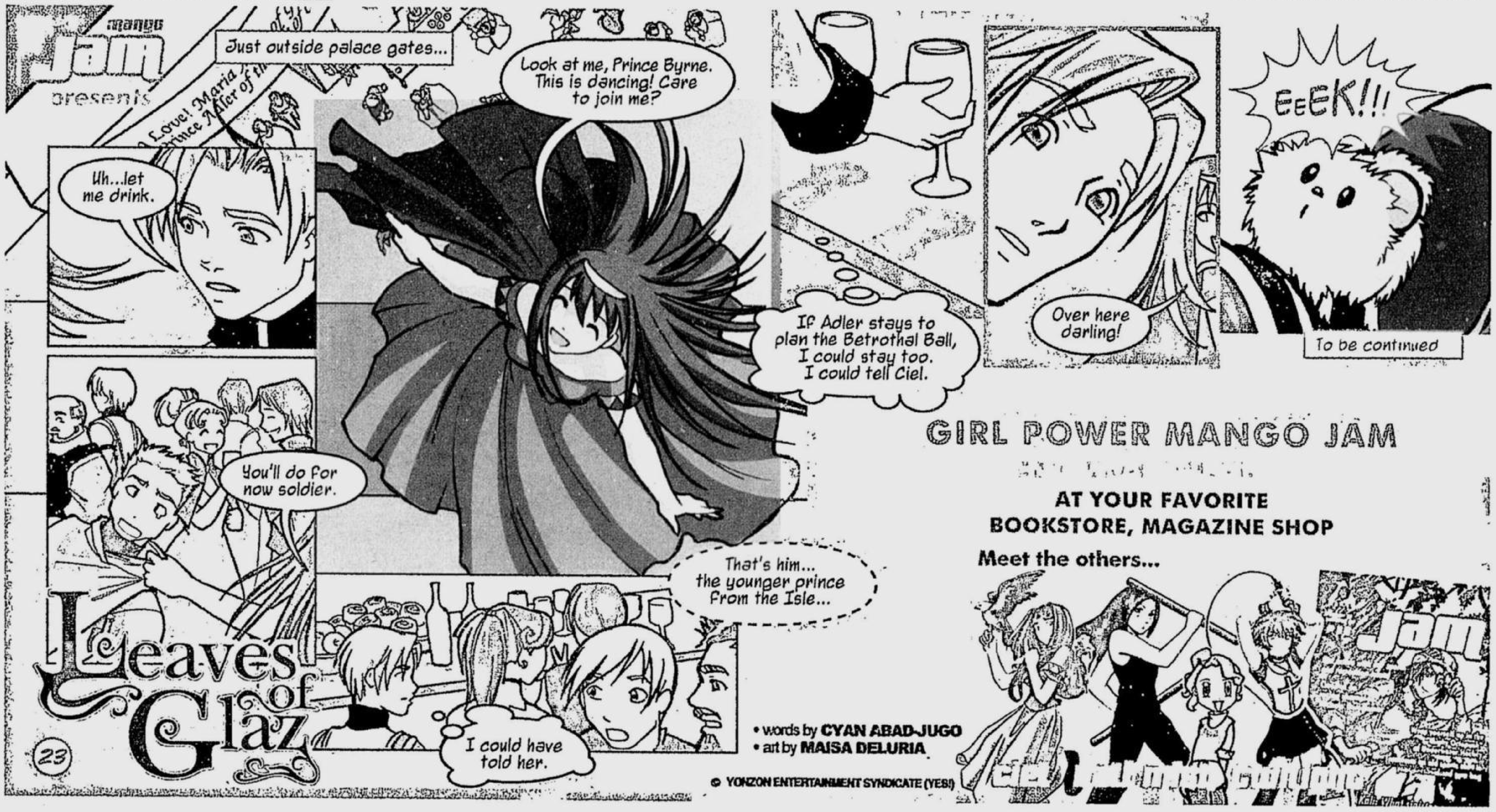
INDAY WANDA

BY BLOG CALIGUIA


©By the artfarm animation workshop
INDAY WANDA
OHAIYO GOZAIMASHITA! MY NAME IS MARY SUE...
MARY SUE BOREN!
YOROSHIKU!
!
UM, HELLO!
WATASHI WA ELENA DESU!
art eMLayug
CHESTER
WAI! YOU CAN SPEAK JAPANESE TOO?
AH, HINDI! NATUTUNAN KO LANG YUN SA ANIME!
AH, OKAY! ANYWAY, BAGO LANG AKO DITO. DATI AKO NAKATIRA SA JAPAN!
COOLNESS!
WELCOME TO FATIMA HIGH!
GUSTONG GUSTO KO ANG PUPPIES, BUNNIES, KITTIES, PONIES, DOLLIES, FAIRIES, BIRDIES.
UM. THAT'S NICE.
..BISHIES. CANDIES. FISHIES. ANIME. MANGA...
OKAY. NOW YOU'RE DIVULGING TOO MUCH INFO
...
TO BE CONTINUED...

LEAVES OF GLAZ

BY MANGO COMICS


mango Jam presents
Just outside palace gates...
Love! Maria Prince Adler of the
Look at me, Prince Byrne. This is dancing! Care to join me?
Uh...let me drink.
You'll do for now soldier.
If Adler stays to plan the Betrothal Ball, I could stay too. I could tell Ciel.
Over here darling!
EeEK!!!
To be continued
That's him... the younger prince from the Isle...
I could have told her.
Leaves of Glaz
23
Jam

• words by **CYAN ABAD-JUGO**
• art by **MAISA DELURIA**

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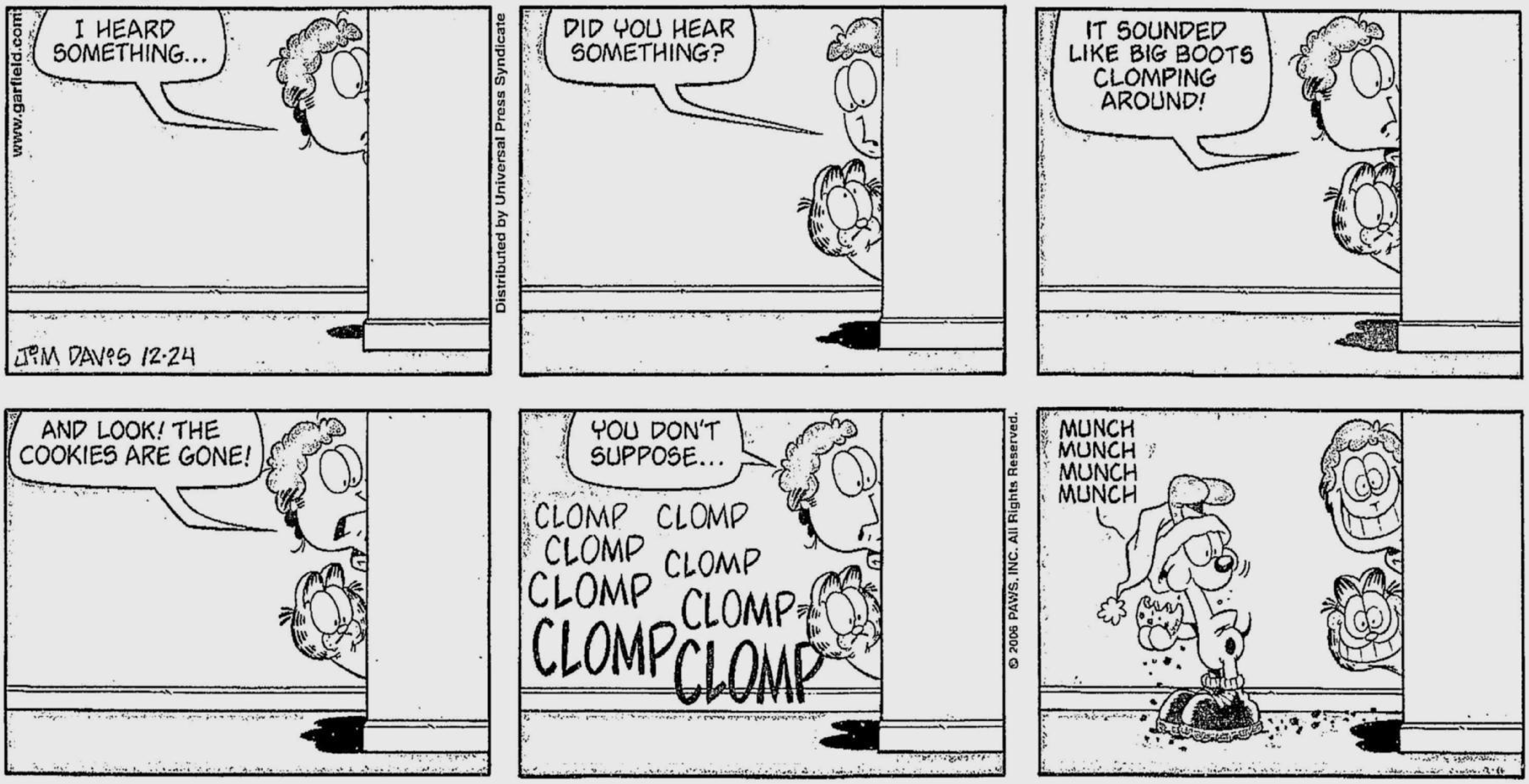
BY JIM DAVIS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I HEARD SOMETHING...
JIM DAVIS 12-24
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IT SOUNDED LIKE BIG BOOTS CLOMPING AROUND!
AND LOOK! THE COOKIES ARE GONE!
YOU DON'T SUPPOSE...
CLOMP CLOMP CLOMP CLOMP CLOMP CLOMP CLOMP CLOMP
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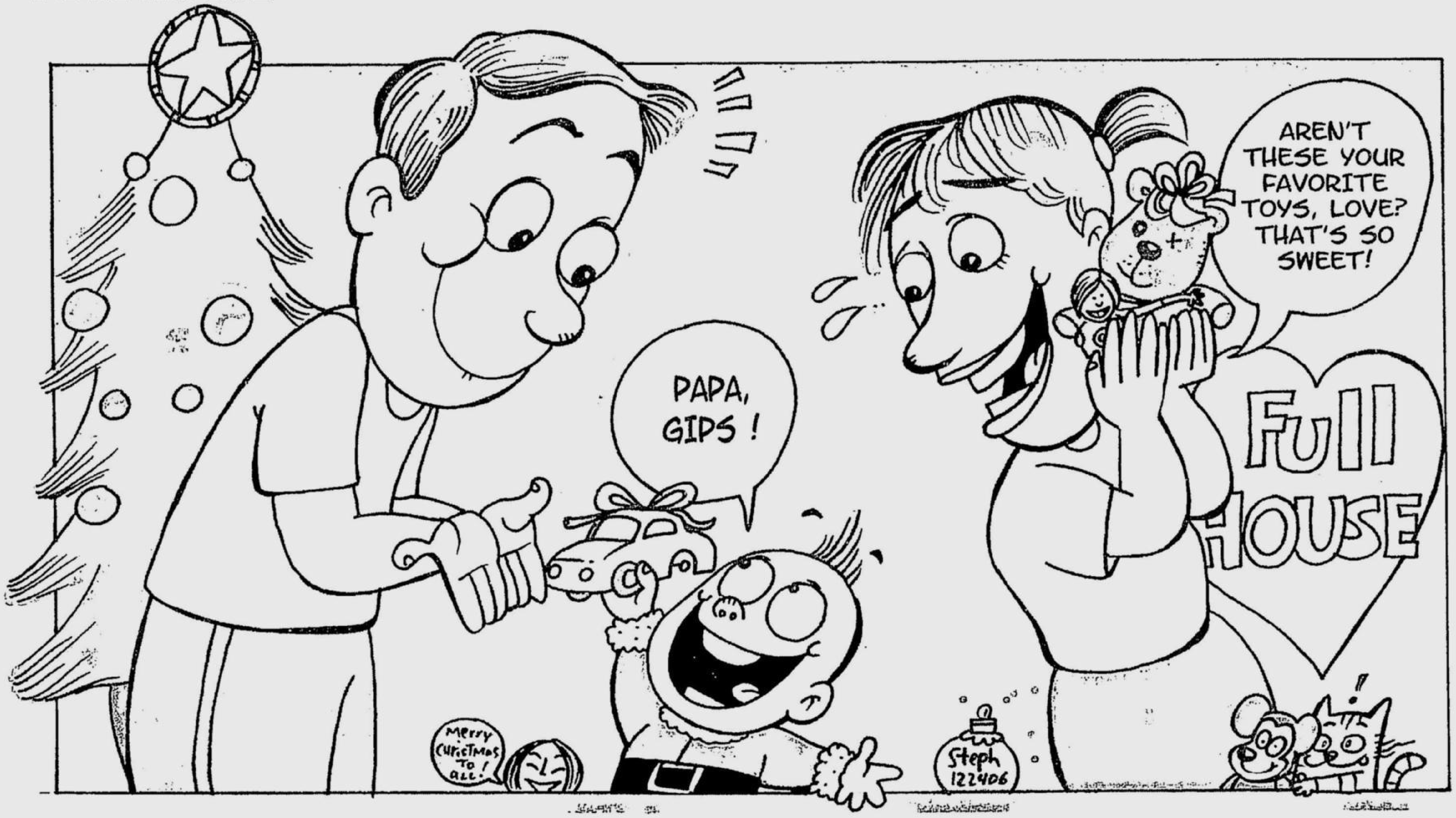
MUNCH MUNCH MUNCH MUNCH

FULL HOUSE

BY STEPH BRAVO


AREN'T THESE YOUR FAVORITE TOYS, LOVE? THAT'S SO SWEET!
PAPA, GIPS !
Full HOUSE
Merry Christmas To all!
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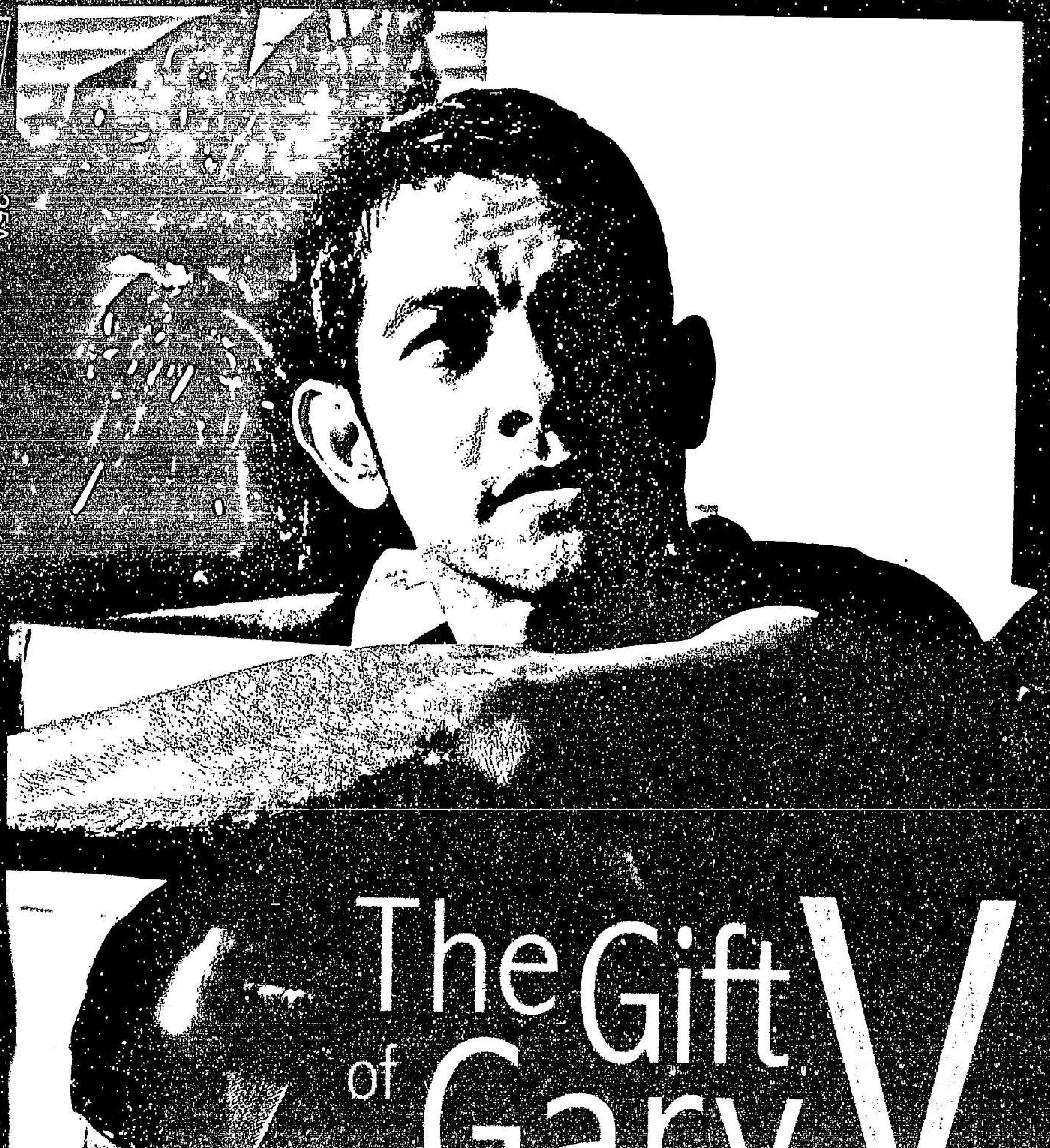

The Gift of Gary V

What can one man do? More than you think, says one of the country's best-loved entertainers, recalling decades of faith, music, and low-key charity work through his beloved Shining Light Foundation

PLUS: Impy Pilapil creates trees of life • Tintin Bersola saves the dogs • San Mig cagers cheer up the kids • Hands On Manila's 12 ways to help, and more

By Jasmine W. Payo
Photographs by August de la Cruz

San Mig Lights

Three PBA stalwarts spend quality time with kids in need

HE HUNG a Christmas sock like any other kid.

Over 10 Christmas holidays later, San Miguel Beer cager Lordy Tugade laughs at the thought that his parents "tricked" him.

"I really believed in Santa Claus, that he's the one putting the gifts in my socks. It turned out to be my parents," Tugade recounts in Filipino. But the crushed kid turned out to be a popular, wiry wingman in the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA).

And soon enough, Tugade found himself playing the role of Santa, too.

This Christmas, the 6'3" forward, formerly of National University, took on a more amusing task. "I became a Christmas tree," Tugade laughs. "But I had fun, the kids enjoyed it." Staying still may be tough for someone in perpetual action on the hardcourt, but Tugade did it to put smiles on the faces of hard-luck youth in Help International Children's Missionary Community. When you see the kids happy, you're also happy," he says.

The Christmas tree activity was just one of many games Tugade and his San Miguel teammates Wesley Gonzales and Gabby Espinas played with 21 kids in a one-day outreach program.

All standing above six feet, they were the tallest Christmas trees the kids ever had in their two-storey shelter tucked away in a quiet neighborhood in Cubao.

"We enjoyed it because we were able to make them happy and I think they liked us," adds Espinas, a 6'5" Amerasian rookie from Olongapo, a former MVP from Philippine Christian University.

Most of the kids basked in the attention of the towering strangers. Ten-year-old Marlon easily warmed up to the three Beermen and often sat on their laps.

"*Sabik sila sa tao* (They're in need of company)," observes Tugade. "We talked to them and they shared their stories. They were happy and I just advised them to be obedient and to listen to the missionaries."

Tugade, Gonzales, Espinas, Hector Calma (team manager and one of PBA's 25 All-Time Greats), and several other San Miguel employees played parlor games, gave gift packs and shared dinner with the kids.

"It's a time to get away from work, see the kids and share a little bit of your time since it really means so much to them," San Miguel internal communications manager Kin Lichauco says.

But amid all the laughter and boisterous fun, Gonzales also found the experience moving.

"It gives one a different perspective on life," says the 26-year-old forward, who starred for the Ateneo Blue Eagles in the collegiate ranks.

Plucked from the streets and high-risk families, the children found a temporary sanctuary with the Christian missionaries from Germany.

"This house gives them a feel of family atmosphere," says Mirja Lotz, one of the Germans who helped put up the organization seven years ago. "We eat together. They go to public or private schools, we do tutoring. They do some little duties inside the house."

Merry old time: Beermen (clockwise from top left) Wesley Gonzales, Gabby Espinas and Lordy Tugade get into the holiday spirit

It was also a place of healing for some of the Filipino staff and volunteers like Jose Mari Lecciones, a former drug dependent who decided to turn his life around.

"It's rewarding, although not in a financial sense. My family asked me why I wanted to stay here, but it's very fulfilling," says Lecciones, a graduate of the German Missionaries Drug Rehabilitation Set Free Center.

The 30-year-old Lotz, a former kindergarten teacher, shares other inspiring stories of her young wards.

"We have three who came from the streets who finished high school and are now in college. One is taking up nursing, another commerce, while the other is taking up computer studies," she recounts.

"It's very fulfilling since I feel I am in God's world with what I am doing," Lotz adds.

And on that day, the three young San Miguel players felt the same way.

"Everyone was just happy," says Tugade.•

by Margaux Salcedo

Gifts of Great Taste

Nothing warms the heart and satisfies the stomach like a gift of food, this season and all year round

Merry Christmas, everyone!

In the spirit of gift-giving, I would like to share some of my favorite food gifts:

1. Top of mind is always *ensaimada*, whether it is for Christmas, to be enjoyed with a cup of Nana Meng Tsokolate, or for *pasalubong* for friends and relatives abroad. My mom's favorite is the classic Hizon's *Ensaimada*. The main shop is on J. Bocobo St. in Manila, but fortunately for us Makati peeps, Landmark carries Hizon's now, as well.

More conveniently located and also very yummy is Mary Grace *Ensaimada*, which is located at most malls, including Glorietta 4's third level and the Rockwell food court. Mary Grace's *ensaimada* is melt-in-your-mouth soft and has been received so well by the AB market that they have opened a cafe in Serendra.

Hannah Reyes

The well-loved Chocolate Crinkles by Becky's Kitchen

But to really splurge, my ultimate favorite *ensaimada* is one I chanced upon at the Legazpi Market (only on Sunday mornings to lunch). Called EnsaimaDada Gourmet *Ensaimadas* after its owner Dada Dayrit, who makes everything herself, this *ensaimada* comes from a secret Dayrit family recipe. It is admittedly pricey at P125 a piece, but is six inches across and may come in different flavors such as Nutella, Cookie Dough, Pastillas or *Queso de Bola*. Promise it is worth every bite (order at 822-3948 or 0917-8951545 or go to CocoaLoco at the Legazpi Market on Sunday morning.)

2. My next favorite gifts are cakes. Now cakes will take a whole other article, so I'll just mention two of my favorites. Traditionally, we have always gone to Becky's Kitchen, located on Bautista St. in Manila. A get-together does not seem complete without Becky's Prune Walnut Cake on our table. By this time, though, you may not be able to order from her anymore because they are so in demand that they close orders around a week prior to Christmas. But hey, there's the rest of next year! (Also a must-try and great as well to give as gifts are her chocolate crinkles and lemon squares.)

For an even harder-to-find treat, there is Chef Jill Sandique's pistachio sans rival. She makes it only by order (call 721-7022). It's simply the best there is. 'Nuf said.

3. Another favorite: traditional *kakanins*. To give this as a gift, just get your favorite *kakanins* from your *suki* in your province, ribbon it up in a basket, and tadaaah—there's your amazing *palengke*-to-riches gift find. It would help, of course, if the recipient is a *kakanin*-lover himself. Coming from Bulacan, my favorite *kakanins* are *suman antala* (but admittedly, Tita Paring's Suman Latik is my city favorite), *bibingka malagkit* (note: this is not the yellow *bibingka*; this one is rice-based, almost like a pie version of *suman* but with *gata* on top) and cassava cake. I'm partial to Nana Meng Tsokolate in Glorietta 4 and Market!Market! (0920-9023216 or 0917-8339539), which also carries a *kakanin* line to go with the Special Cashew Tsokolate, which, come to think of it, is also a great gift on its own. They put six bundles of *suman* and a bottle of hot chocolate in a basket for a *suman con tsokolate* feast!

4. Speaking of rice, when I was younger, I remember one of my dad's gifts to special friends would always be a sack of rice. Can't beat this gift: It's practical, very generous (a sack is around 50 kilos), and always well-appreciated.

5. Another unusual gift is a bottle of really good vinegar. Never underestimate the power of *suka*! Arengga vinegar has nicely bottled vinegar that comes in flavors like rosemary and tarragon. At the Salcedo Market, you can also find special Ilocos vinegar. Look for Aileen Elbo's stall.

6. The bestseller at the Salcedo Market, in fact, are the fruits from Rene's Fruit Stand, which offers exotic fruits from the world over, including persimmons, Korean pears, golden apples, cherries, and Bangkok lanzones (412-5340 for special orders). Put them in a basket, and even Imelda Marcos should be touched.

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By Cora Llamas

Fixing the Good Samaritan's Sked

Gianna Montinola and Hands On Manila's calendar of charity enables everyone to help out in their own time

Jim Guiao Punzalan

TIME. It's the one true limitation that many well-meaning but busy professionals encounter when they feel the desire to give back to their community and the country.
Another constraint is finding the cause they'd like to devote themselves to.

Hands On Manila (HOM), which its website describes as "a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing members with diverse, flexible volunteer opportunities that address the needs of the community," presents a very workable solution: Give the Good Samaritan a variety of choices wherein he will find one that will suit his gifts, his inclinations and, most significantly, his schedules.

HOM President Atty. Gianna Montinola elaborates about the kind of introduction to volunteer work provided by the NGO which was established five years ago: "You are asked to attend a one-hour orientation session where you learn about HOM. If you decide to join, we ask you to fill up an application and we e-mail you a calendar of activities at the beginning of each month. This will hopefully allow you to make volunteer work a part of your weekly or monthly schedule. The calendar also allows you to try different things: If you taught art to children and did not find it appealing, you can shift to helping clean a park or something else.

"In all my experiences with social and community work, I find that people have different interests and find fulfillment in doing different things. That is why I thought this model would succeed here—it allows you to do what you want to do, where and when you want to do it."

One attraction of the HOM model is its compatibility and flexibility with the lifestyle of people who are always running after the clock. "Our calendar program allows you to do volunteer work any day of the week, like reading to children, painting schools, sorting out donated goods, teaching art, cooking, English or Math, feeding others or participating in sports programs."

Montinola cites a few examples: "A group of us teaches art to children at the

(continued on page 5)

Gifts of Great Taste (from page 3

7. A classic gift is the bottle of wine. There is always Santi's Deli, of course, at Rockwell or Yakal but for he who is not a restaurateur, Chef Tonyboy Escalante of Antonio's recommends Terry's Selection on Pasong Tamo Extension. I hear the owner, Juan Carlos de Terry, has a Ph.D in oenology!

8. For the non-alcoholic, there is chocolate. A box of Max Brenner pralines always exudes love. The top three recommendations of my chocoholic authority friend Jemps Gallegos among chocolates found in supermarkets are: Lindt 50-percent dark, Meiji Black and Old Gold with Roasted Almonds by Cadbury. My own all-time favorite chocolate is the classic Ferrero Rocher, available in most supermarkets.

9. If you don't want to shop, get a gift certificate to a restaurant. Nothing can beat a gift certificate to Antonio's Fine Dining in Tagaytay, especially this holiday season. Chef Tonyboy Escalante is offering a nine-course French dinner. Call 0917-8992866.

10. But the best gift of all is a home-cooked or home-baked gift. Nothing like Goldee's chocolate chip cookies or Pixie's brownies or Tita Cory's fruit salad. Try a traditional family recipe or get something off the Internet, pour a little sweat in with the sugar (or not), and everyone will enjoy your labor of love. Ho! Ho! Ho! •

Fixing the Good Samaritan's Sked (from page 4)

Hands On Manila also sells gift cards and planners to raise funds for the organization

Kaisahang Buhay Foundation in Quezon City. I also join another group that does cooking lessons at the Holy Family Home shelter for girls in Makati. At times my daughter joins me in these sessions, especially since she is the better cook!"

Montinola is one of these very busy people herself. This mother of two sits on the board of the Far Eastern University and the True Value Hardware Corporation, managing their administration and operations. She used to practice commercial, corporate and intellectual property law after graduating from the Ateneo College of Law in the 1980s.

Still, beneath the daily corporate grind beat a heart that was aching to do something more. A large part of it was nurtured during her undergraduate years in Assumption College, where the students were encouraged to solicit funds or donate goods to the victims of a calamity or to visit the poor and homeless come Christmas time. "The school nurtures a great desire to give back," Montinola recalls and then points out, "You will find it interesting that all the five other women who were with me as founding members of the Hands On board are also from Assumption College."

An appointment to Peru, where she stayed with her family as the Philippine Honorary Consul, lit the embers inside that were looking for some form of self-expression. The experience was an eye-opener; Montinola saw firsthand that people did not have to be affluent to take pride in their heritage or to participate in the betterment of their nation.

"Even my Peruvian help were knowledgeable of their Incan ancestry," she says. "In my travels around the country to places like Macchu Picchu and Lake Titicaca, there was tremendous pride of place. There was hardly any litter at heritage sites, no destruction and great respect for heritage laws. Yet this is a country that has the same problems as we do with food, education, environment and disasters."

This awareness spurred Montinola to join the Heritage Conservation Society. Today, she has a hand in restoring the historical structures at the FEU and sees to it that HOM is partnered with organizations that are also keen on preserving heritage.

Montinola learned of HOM from a friend who was involved with the Hands On Network Foundation in the US. Seeing the potential that the group could offer Filipinos hungry for some kind of involvement, she called the US foundation asking for some kind of tie-up—and HOM was born, becoming HOM's first international affiliate. Currently, there are eight affiliates all over the world.

Montinola enthuses about the Manila branch: "HOM trains and educates volunteers and provides opportunities for them to work in HOM-developed programs in the various NGOs." About 50 organizations have links with HOM (see page 13 for some of them), and the groundswell of goodwill that HOM has built up has culminated in a Hands On Servathon last month which had top Philippine companies sending teams from their own staff to paint orphanages, plant in urban gardens and clean the Pasig River.

Montinola wishes that the Servathon will be the first of many. "We hope that other corporations will join us next year. In the US, there are as many as 100 corporations participating in a day's event. Now, that's something to aspire for. The corporations are a valuable tool for change in this country."

So are individuals; HOM has about 400 core volunteers. As Montinola has learned through these years, " Many people want to give in one way or another. We realized that when we ask people to give of their time to a good cause, they are always willing to do so." •

Click on www.handsonmanila.org. E-mail info@handsonmanila.org or call 843-5231.

By Alya B. Honasan

Her Christmas Trees of Life

Impy Pilapil's exquisite little glass creations help add some sparkle to the season for sick children and their families

Photograph by Isa Pilapil and Jan Cuevas

THEY ARE a joy to behold when gathered together, a tiny forest of exquisite glass Christmas trees growing from a marble base. There are trees with squiggly sides dotted with green beads, or trees hand-painted in bright colors. There are trees with cross cutouts, or splashes of the familiar waves that have come to mark many of the works of sculptor Impy Pilapil over the years. But more than just eternal adornments for the season, however, these trees have also provided a perfect way for the artist to lend a helping hand. Each season, Pilapil creates three different versions of this foot-high work of art, producing 10 editions each. Proceeds go entirely to a cause that has moved her more than any other: the plight of children with cancer.

About three years ago, upon the invitation of a friend, Pilapil paid a visit to the East Avenue Medical Center, where the Kythe Foundation maintained facilities for children with cancer. "I met a few parents, and heard a lot of stories. There was a family from Mindoro who took the bus to Manila at 2 a.m., got to the hospital at noon to bring their one-year-old baby who had cancer, and who couldn't eat because they couldn't afford it—they had to save the money for the trip back. *Napatanga ako* (my jaw dropped)," she recalls. "And here we are throwing away food." Another time, Pilapil recalls visiting during game time, and noticed how some children wouldn't join in because, as their mothers said, they were embarrassed that they had a missing eye. Apparently, when children grew tumors in the brain, the pressure could sometimes cause their eyes to bulge or even pop out of their skulls. "And you know how much a plastic prosthetic eye is? P1,500," Pilapil says. "And there are people who queue up to buy bags worth hundreds of thousands of pesos!"

Eventually, depressed by what she would witness, Pilapil decided to do something more productive outside of her visits, something she could do on her own. "I didn't want just a fundraising project. I could ask friends, but how many times *naman* can you keep asking?" Since there is a constant demand for her Christmas trees, it has become her mission to make them every year for sick children.

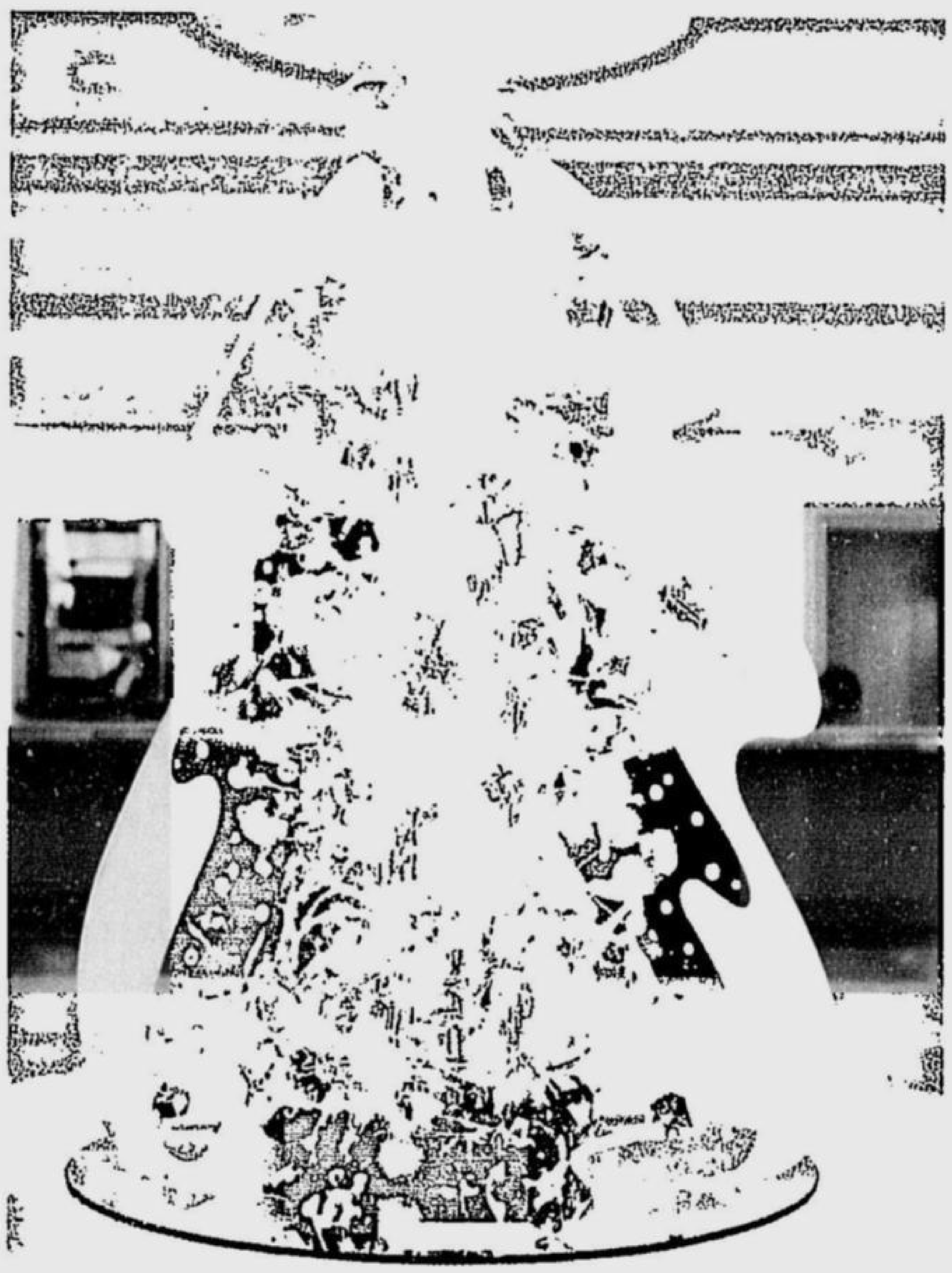
It seems a good match in spirit. Kythe Foundation was formed in 1992 by two psychology graduate students from the Ateneo de Manila, Girlie Garcia and Icar Castro, to reach out to pediatric cancer patients through their Child Life Program. The East Avenue Medical Center was their first home, and by 2004 the program had received a People Power Award from Cory Aquino, and was officially an NGO. Today they work with some nine affiliate hospitals to alleviate the suffering of both sick children and their families.

Pilapil's own work is nothing if not a celebration of life, in a lighthearted, joyful way, through her work with a wide range of hard, solid materials that she somehow coaxes into the softest of shapes. After a year at the University of the Philippines and art studies in the Accademia Italiana in Rome and the Pratt Graphics Center in New York, Pilapil first set her eyes on serigraphs on paper, which she exhibited in Rome in her first solo show in 1973. "Then I wanted to work in two dimensions, so I started working with steel," she recalls. The metal waves begged for a more transparent medium, leading her to glass, which she began combining with stone by the mid-'80s.

Just when people have taken to calling her "the glass artist," a label that can be both frustrating and amusing, Pilapil has begun doing funky things with sheet glass and playing with marble. "I guess I never claimed to be just a glass artist; I like to think I'm a sculptor of different media."

A diligent student of Austrian philosopher and anthroposophy founder Rudolf Steiner, who espoused that the spiritual world can be accessible to man through proper scientific self-development, Pilapil found a humbling experience in the shift from glass, "a completely man-made product," to stone, whose original form is determined solely by nature. "Stone speaks to you," she explains. "You can treat glass like an object and subject it to what you want, but you have to respect the life force that carved a stone into being."

Creative celebrations: Pilapil's trees of cigarette foil and cardboard, 2002 (above), and sheet and handblown glass, 1997 (below), both previously displayed at the Intercon lobby



Nowadays, Pilapil relies on this respectful "dialogue" with her material to determine whether to leave it alone or polish or refine it. The interesting results of such dialogues can still be seen in her latest show, "Earth Empowered," ongoing until January 7 at Galleria Duemila. Last November, an exhibit at the Avellana Art Gallery featured her latest steel works, while "cradles" of glass holding "corals" made of melted and stretched Pyrex, ingenious results of her very own flamework, captivated visitors at the Alliance Francaise—a triple whammy of yearend shows that took Pilapil three years to prepare for.

Even in the house Pilapil has lived in for the last 22 years, which she rebuilt after a traumatic 2003 fire and which she shares with daughter Isa, a painter and website and book designer, and their dogs Magnus and Vito, Christmas trees figure prominently in the whimsical décor. She has been part of the Hotel Intercontinental Manila's regular Christmas Tree festival for years, exhibiting pieces made of glass, and even used cigarette foil and cardboard.

She's also trying to spread the love a little more; when she decorated the Hyatt Hotel's lobby last year, she asked management to sneak in a drop box for Kythe. "It was just like the tree we had in the lobby, made of recycled bits of broken glass," she recalls. "We can help put the broken dreams of sick children back together again."•

The Kythe Foundation is on the third floor, Middle Room, Korben Place, 91 Roces Ave. corner Scout Tobias, Quezon City, tel. nos. 376-3454 and (0918) 907-2094, or e-mail kytheinc@yahoo .com.

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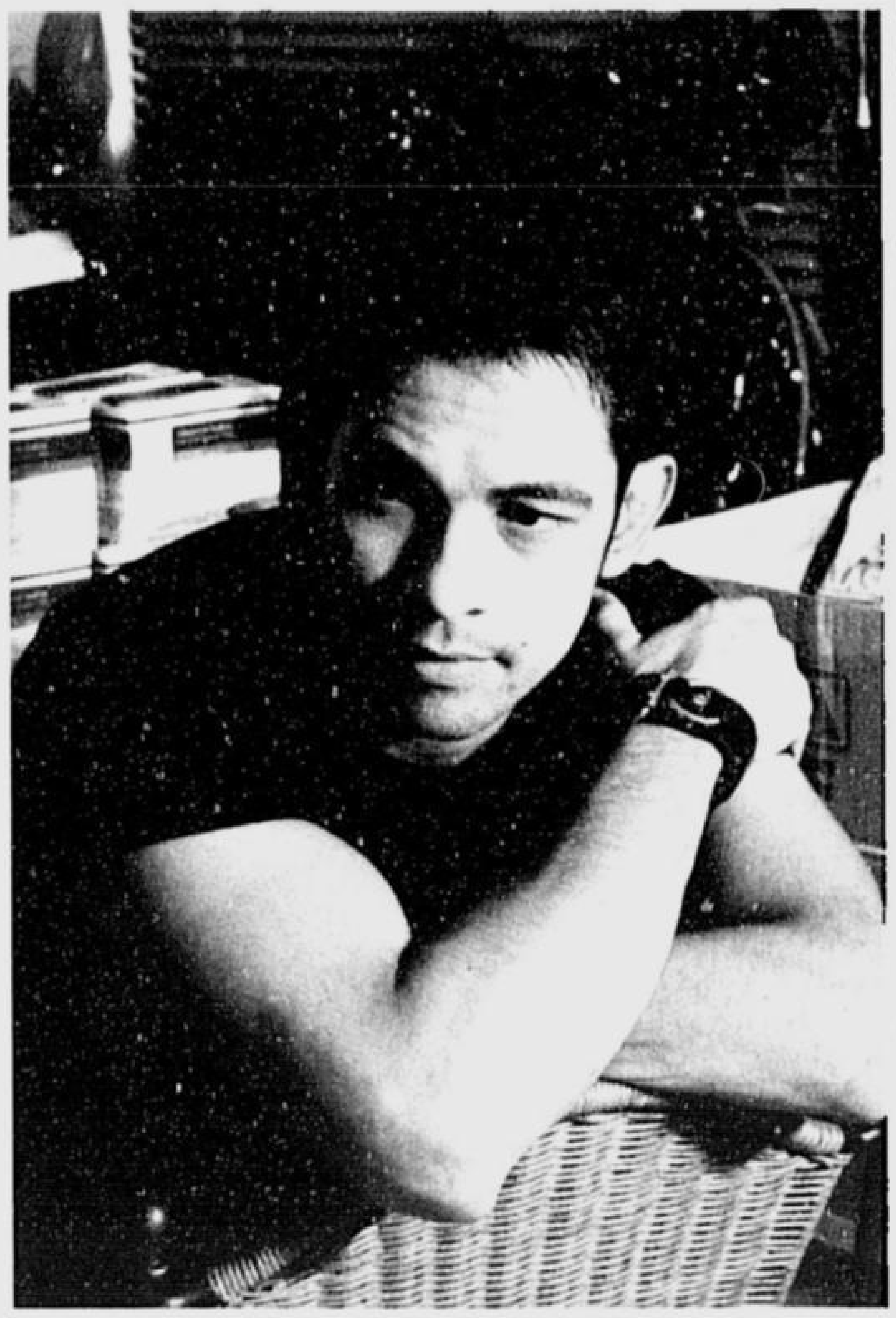


AS difficult as it is to imagine, Gary Valenciano has entered middle age. From the fragile, dusty jewel cases that hold our precious pop culture recollections, he doesn't just fit his moniker—Mr. Pure Energy—he outpaces it. Which Gary V is your Gary V? Is it the moonwalking '80s dervish with the Michael Jackson shadow? Is it the frenetic '90s stage dynamo, shouting for joy, clad in parachute pants? Perhaps you prefer the current, high-tech incarnation: an entertainer for a new generation? Even our amazement fails to keep up with him.

Yes, Edgardo Jose Santiago Valenciano is 42. That number is only one in a posse of significant numbers: 22 (the number of years he's been married to Angeli Pangilinan), 22 (age of son Paolo), 18 (the age of son Gabriel), 14 (age of only daughter Kiana), 23 (years he's been in show biz) and 28 (years he's been living with Type 1 Diabetes).

In everyone's mind, he is the impossibly energetic performer, dancing the impossible and singing the memorable. Yet his eldest son has already come of age and could, if Paolo so wishes it, get married and start a family. Gary V, a grandfather? Grampa Pure Energy?

"I don't know," he says with an exasperated smile. "I won't allow myself to be called *lolo* until I'm over 50. Maybe, we'll go with 'Papi.' " Yet even he knows it isn't that far off. The devout Christian says that it's his faith that keeps him going (and going and going)—part preacher, part acrobat and all benefactor.

Truth is, he doesn't look his age. In a fitting black shirt, Gary looks impossibly chiseled. He has superhero biceps. He moves with deliberate yet crisp motion, seemingly always on the verge of breaking into a shuffle or a spin. When he talks, the words tapdance out of his mouth in perfect order and emphasis.

And he doesn't feel his age, either. "I feel 10 years younger," he says. Standing 5'11 ½" and weighing 167 lbs, Gary is now in the single best shape of his life. "The concert is a major workout, going anywhere from two-and-a-half to three hours," he notes. Aside from the performances, Gary keeps a grueling routine.

Monday is basketball day, when he hits the court at 6 p.m., often playing with buddies from La Salle Greenhills. Tuesday morning brings with it one of Gary's favorite activities: riding his mountain bike. Wednesdays, he plays golf or goes to the gym. Thursday is, well, basketball day, part two. Fridays and Saturdays are concert days. Sundays is spent performing on television. "That's a different kind of strain," he says.

Ever the early adaptor, Gary has been using the insulin pump for his diabetes for over a year. It's been a welcome gadget. "It's made life easier for all those around me," he says. Angeli no longer has to wake up every two hours to check up on him; his household companions no longer have to be constantly on edge. "The biggest change is that I no longer experience the same attacks," he adds. "I get to do more with people worrying about me less."

As befitting his personality, Gary is

always busy with something. He's preparing for a December 30 concert at the Riverbanks in Marikina City, a venue that Gary likes. The big project is his plan to go international. Next year, he will be breaking into the United States market and hopefully thrive. "I just feel that I've given practically everything I could here and I will continue doing so," he says. "But there are still things I need to learn."

This might sound strange coming from someone who has done pretty much everything that a recording artist can think of: the platinum records (he has 21 albums in all), the awards (he has 14 Awit Awards), the massive concerts, even the movies. There are other plans brewing as well. He wants to become more accomplished as a producer and an audio engineer. "I'd like to record a big band here and then engineer it in such a way that when it's played abroad, it will sound like it came from there but with Pinoy soul."

As the years go by, Mr. Pure Energy ponders the idea of, gulp, slowing down. "Slowing down maybe in some areas, but not in my passion and love for the industry and what it's done for me."

But his American adventure is something he takes seriously. Unlike his good friend Martin Nievera, who resides in the US and performs virtually every night, Gary says he's out to do some "strategic performances, appearing in places where I can make an impact, say if the government needs me to sing here or there." In fact, Gary just recorded the theme song for the 15th Asian Games in Doha, Qatar. "I wasn't there but it was played there," he says proudly.
Gary is quick to point out he's not migrating. "It's not to live there," he explains. "It's purely for work. I will live here. This is a country I feel is always open to hear the kind of music that I do."

And then, there is Shining Light. What many people don't know is just how much Gary has been doing to help those in need. Even early in his career, he was already doing charity work, donating concert proceeds to the likes of the Philippine Red Cross, among others. But in 1989, he took a major step by founding the Shining Light Foundation Inc.

"It started with people knowing I was a diabetic," he recalls, adding that he would meet with similarly diagnosed folks who were worried. "I know that I had been given the chance to help others in any way possible." Through connections and acquaintances, Gary saw the chance to make the giving more effective. "I know for a fact that many artists were just looking for a means to give back."

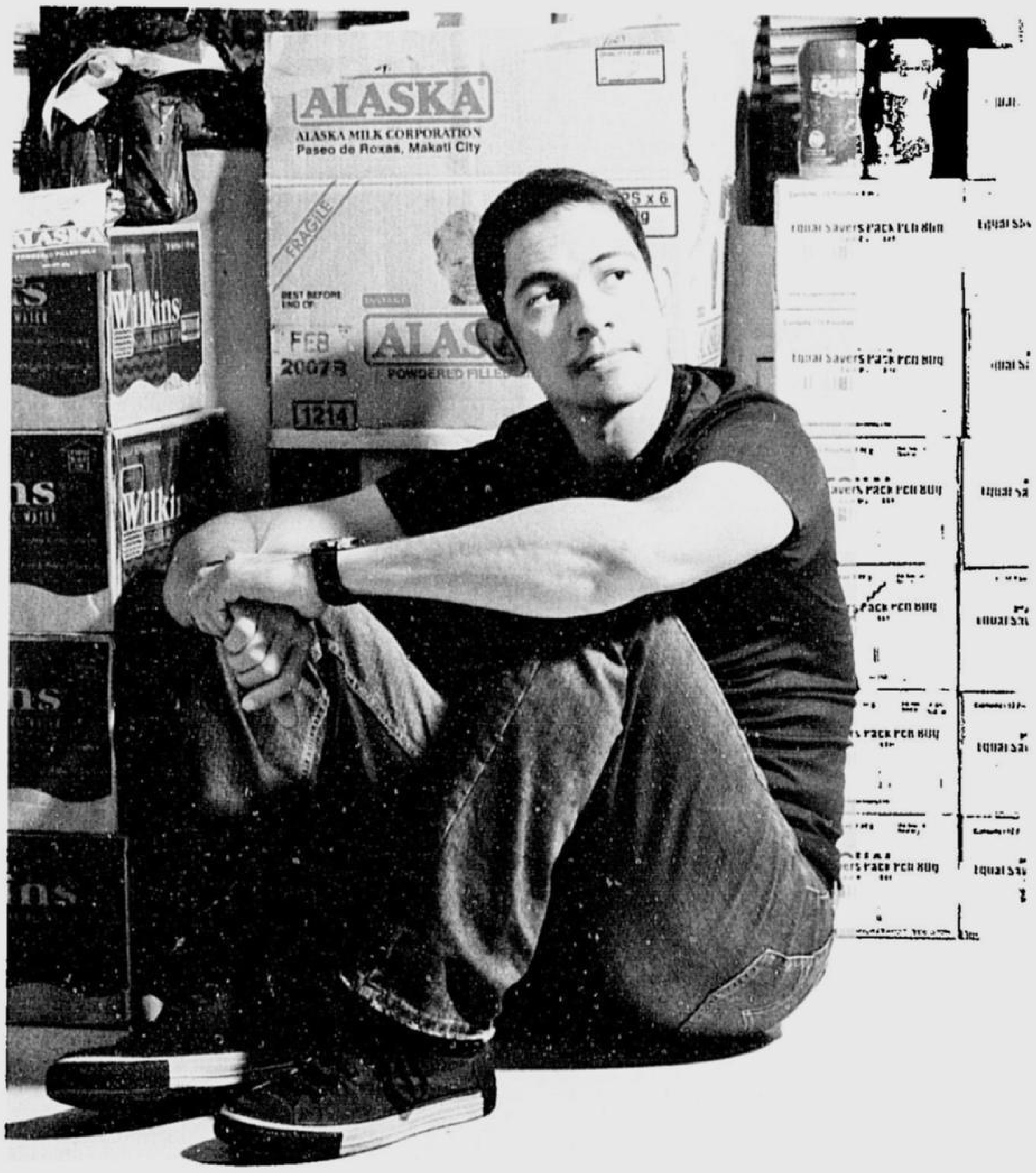
Gary on the road: (Clockwise from right) Talking to rescue workers in Guinsaugon, Leyte; joining a Manila polio vaccination drive; performing for students in Guimaras

An early cause that was close to Gary's heart is still a priority: juvenile diabetes (Gary is a member of the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation of the Philippines). "The biggest setback is that people are just not educated enough to understand what the diabetic goes through." The technology has advanced, but it isn't something everyone can afford. This is where Gary is happy to have Shining Light to help him out. "Every time I go to the States, I get machines and stuff that people who know about the Foundation just give, and we give it to the people here." The Philippines has one of the highest incidences of diabetes in the world, so it's vital to get people better informed.

Originally operating out of the Genesis office, Shining Light now has an office in Greenhills as well as an ultra-efficient full-time staff of three, overseen by Angeli. Shining Light regularly sends out goods for the needy. And they pull together quickly to aid those beset by terrible disasters. After the tsunami struck Southeast Asia, Shining Light raised funds for that cause as well. Gary usually headlines the concerts to raise the funds, usually putting together the event in a week.

A goodwill ambassador for UNICEF since 1998, he actually visited devastated parts of Quezon last year with the international organization. "I get to sit down and talk to the people," he says somberly. There was a recent trip to Guinsaugon after the landslide, for example. "You can't just look at them and say 'everything's going to be OK,' " he says. "But it does help, and I go there with the hope that the rebuilding can start." Upon his return, he began putting together the mechanism to send help to Guinsaugon. After a trip to Sagada, Gary sent boxes of books because the women there had never learned how to read. Whenever he's out of Manila for concerts, he tries to set time aside to visit shelters. Notably, he refuses to bring press along when he visits the needy children.

It is a testament to Gary's commitment to giving that he set up an entire foundation to organize the giving, without the bright lights. While he recognizes the need to make people aware of Shining Light and its causes, Gary actually plays down his presence. He also admits the required legwork can wear him down. "I take a break sometimes," he admits, "but not from the giving." But when he thinks of the generosity of those who have bought tickets for his causes, he keeps on moving. "That's what stops me from



At the Shining Light Foundation office, where relief goods are collected: 'That's the way I want to celebrate Christmas—by giving back'

The Gift of Gary V (from page 9)

saying, *'ayoko na,' "* he says.

He has never let the idea that he's just one person stand in his way—it's just a matter of finding like-minded people. "People just have to get involved," Gary explains earnestly. "There are many organizations out there, not just Shining Light or UNICEF, that are put up with the express purpose of making a difference. You get involved in that, and that alone adds on to working towards fulfilling a vision that might seem so grand, but not impossible."

Aside from concerns that the Foundation itself or UNICEF considers urgent, Shining Light gets a lot of requests, and the Foundation studies each area of need very closely. In 2002, the Bureau of Internal Revenue named Shining Light a Donee Institution, allowing donations to the Foundation to become tax-deductible. While some of his concerts are expressly for fund-raising, Gary always donates proceeds from all his concerts to Shining Light, or some other cause. "There's always an element of giving," he explains.

And the giving goes on. New tragedies require fresh efforts. On December 29, he will take to the stage in "Wave of Hope 2" at the Mall of Asia. All the proceeds will go to UNICEF and Shining Light to benefit the victims of Typhoon Reming. "I'm half-Bicolano," says Gary, who traces his roots to Camalig, Albay. While the Foundation pretty much runs itself, Gary remains the face and, essentially, the moving force. "I am the instrument by which the bigger fund-raising projects are hooked on to."

One part of Shining Light's program that really delights Gary is providing scholarship for 45 underprivileged children. Gary enjoys the end of the grading quarters because that's when the letters come. "They don't have e-mail, so they send handwritten letters," he says with a big grin. "They're not just in school; they're excelling." Personally, he believes the next step would be to go farther with the scholarships: "It's not just to send them to school, but to send them to good schools. That's what I would like to see."

It's the time he spends with the children that really gets to him, whether through correspondence or in person. "You see their pictures, with the medals, and it occurs to you that we must be doing something good here," he says. Those are his most favorite gifts. His eyes light up, and he sighs. He can't quite find the words. "If only people could experience that," he says.

In the very first week of January, Gary will fly to Bicol to see how he can help. "Things may be better by then, but there's no telling what will happen," he says. He's taking his family with him. "That's the way I want to celebrate the Christmas season, by giving back."

And to him, the denominations don't matter. "The point about Christmas is that we all really believe it is about Christ," Gary says, adding that he admits he himself had fallen into the trap of forgetting. It goes beyond the shopping and wrapping. "Sometimes reaching out to a person you haven't talked to in a long time, wow," he says. "That alone can make such an impact."

Sometimes, people get too caught up with the lists and buying gifts, he says. "You want to do stuff that matters to people, you want to do something that leaves an impact in other people's lives, then we in turn have to present ourselves as gifts for others in what we say and in what we do," Gary V, giver and gift, knows all about dancing the dance. "I basically believe that we ourselves are gifts, and if we can capture that vision there's no telling what kind of Christmas people can truly have."

For donations and inquiries about the Shining Light Foundation Inc., please call tel. no. 721-5668, or e-mail christine_slf@i-manila.com.ph. For information about Gary Valenciano, please log on to www.garyv.com.

By Joy Rojas
Photographs by Romy Homillada

A dog's best friend

By saving them from the streets, TV host Tintin Bersola-Babao gives askals a second chance at life

Mutt love: Tintin with Cleopatra

BEFORE he died of heartworm in early December, Miracle, a dog who resembled a black Labrador, was undergoing treatment with Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) veterinarian Henry de Pedro. He also appeared on a segment in the ABS-CBN morning program "*Magandang Umaga Pilipinas*," and as a result of that appearance, was on his way to being adopted by "Going *Bulilit*" mainstay Kathryn Bernardo. And to think, Miracle was just one of the many *askals* roaming the streets of Quezon City.

Still, no one mourned this dog's demise more than his rescuer, "MUP" co-host Tintin Bersola-Babao. Then on her way to a bank in Timog one sunny September morning, Tintin did not hesitate to help the poor mutt, who came to her attention when he staggered and collapsed next to her car. Upon the advice of Anna Cabrera of PAWS, Tintin, together with her driver, an assistant, and a driver of another car, slid newspapers underneath the dog and gently lifted him to a shady side of the street. At first she thought he was suffering from heatstroke, but a deep wound on his upper right leg revealed that the dog was a victim of a hit-and-run. It was her husband, ABS-CBN news anchor Julius Babao, whom Tintin also called, who suggested she contact the broadcast network to send a crew over to feature the dog for a segment on teaching kids about animal care in "MUP." The segment sparked numerous offers for adoption, but even the veterinary assistance extended by the TV host after the rescue couldn't save this dog's life.

This, as it turns out, wasn't the first time Tintin has come to aid of a dog in distress. In 2002, she and Julius found an *askal* outside her house, a thin, weak dog with a bad case of mange and, worst of all, a chain wrapped around its mouth. The couple christened the dog Snoopy, and together they nursed her back to health. Snoopy has since gone to heaven, but Cleopatra, one of her litter; Hector, a Belgian Malinois; and Bonsai, a mixed breed that Julius' brother gave the couple's daughter Antonia, are the dogs in the Babao household, and as such, enjoy the privileges of all pets under this family's care. That means regular feedings, grooming, and visits from their long-time vet Normi Parpan. The couple, who also owns four birds and a pot-bellied pig named Lucky, calls on Dr. Parpan, too, to provide the vaccines of the puppies they've passed on to their workers and helpers. "It's our way of showing that we still care for the dogs," says Tintin. "At least our workers know that their children are safe with the dogs that come from us."

Indeed, worthy causes can count on the 36-year-old host, who has gone out of her way many times over to help those with the greatest and most immediate of needs. Besides her involvement in high-profile institutions like Gawad Kalinga and the National Book Development, Tintin spearheaded a drive to collect pledges for Ocee Antonino, a child who suffers from billary artresia and requires a liver transplant to survive. Using cans to collect the pledges, the host distributes them herself at the malls and hands them out to whoever she meets. She also supports a program at the Philippine General Hospital where, for a minimum amount, a woman with breast cancer can undergo a much-needed operation.

Supporting animals may seem secondary next to these pressing causes, but Tintin, who includes PAWS among her beneficiaries of choice and has walked the runway with an *askal* in tow for two "fashion shows" organized by animal society, is only too happy to do it.

"People often ask me, What do you see in dogs? *Magastos sila. Eh, totoo naman talaga*," admits Tintin. "I respect other people's opinion, but you have to be a dog owner yourself to understand."

Born, she proudly announces, in the Year of the Dog (1970), Tintin has seen a variety of breeds come in and out of her life. At 7, she received Pypy, a pekingese given to her by her mom for Christmas. Pypy sired Tiny and Bubbles, two Pekingese-Shih Tzu puppies who Tintin literally saw from birth till death, when she watched the sickly Tiny exhale its last breath in her hands. At 11, heartworm wiped out the Bersolas' slew of Dobermans, Shih Tzus and

SUDOKU

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

		9		1		2		
3			2		8			1
		8		6		9		
7			4		3			8
		2		5		4		
1			7		9			6
		5		4		1		

Difficulty Level ★★★★

11/24

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Answer to previous puzzle

1	6	7	3	5	8	2	9	4
5	3	9	7	2	4	1	6	8
2	8	4	6	1	9	5	7	3
3	4	1	2	6	5	9	8	7
7	5	8	9	4	1	6	3	2
6	9	2	8	7	3	4	1	5
8	1	5	4	3	6	7	2	9
4	2	3	1	9	7	8	5	6
9	7	6	5	8	2	3	4	1

Difficulty Level ★★★

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Miracle, the dog that Tintin tried to save

Pekingese. And in high school, fleas felled the family's pets. Yes, each loss was a heartbreaking one, but each new dog was a joy to receive as well.

As fate would have it, the union between Tintin and Julius brought two dog lovers together. Julius, who grew up surrounded by animals (from chickens, turtles and rabbits, to at one point, 15 cats), attributes his attraction to Siberian Huskies to a boyhood fantasy "of watching movies with dogs that pulled sleds and looked like wolves." The Aviary restaurant was where he spotted, and eventually "adopted," his first-ever Siberian Husky. (He now has four.) Tintin, meanwhile, fancied a Chow Chow and got one for herself. Though the dogs now live with Tintin's mom and brother, for a time, the couple made a routine of walking their huskies and chowchow around the grounds of the University of the Philippines and the Ateneo de Manila University. The dogs were even "witness" to the twosome's long-term plans. One afternoon, as they were walking their pets in a Quezon City subdivision, Julius and Tintin stood on a plot of land. Someday, Julius declared, I'm going to buy a house here. Today, the house where they live stands on the very spot where he said those words. "*O*, see," exclaims Tintin, "*Nagkatotoo*! (It came true)"

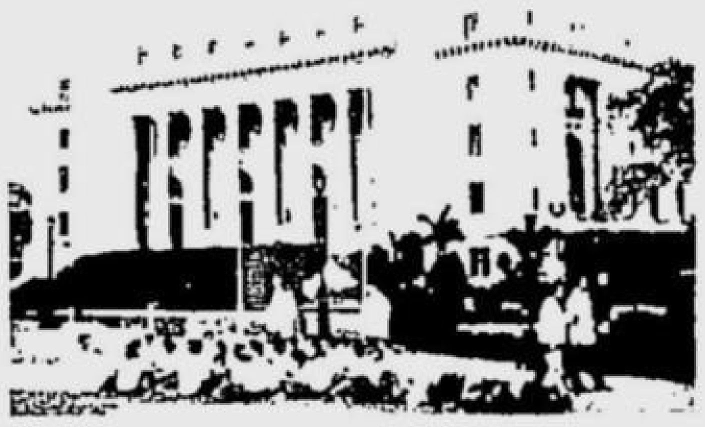
Both, however, clearly have a soft spot for the humble *askal* or *aspin* (*asong* Pinoy) as PAWS prefers to call it. Besides being low maintenance, they're easy to train, and as the couple discovered, very loyal. Their carpenter, who owns a puppy from Cleo and Hector, woke up one morning to the barks of his *alaga*; apparently, the dog was trying to tell his master about a fire in the house. The same dog has also protected his owner from a robber. He takes after his mother, Julius notes.

If there was one frustrating thing about owning a dog, it's not being able to spend more time with it. Given their busy schedules (both appear on "MUP" and Julius anchors the evening news as well as the investigative show "XXX"), the couple has relinquished the relaxing practice of walking the dogs to their caretakers. "I'd rather have someone look after my dog than pretend to have time for it and just neglect it," says Tintin. "We may not be as hands-on as before, but we always make sure our dogs are well taken care of."

The same assurance goes to the next dog she rescues off the street—and knowing Tintin, there will surely be a next dog. "I won't even think twice," she says. "I'll do whatever I can to save its life. It's the conscientious choice." •

If you're interested in adopting an askal *or donating for the upkeep of rehabilitated and rescued animals, call PAWS at tel. no. 475-1688.*

THEY WANT YOU



...To volunteer! These are just some of the partner organizations of Hands On Manila, to give readers an idea of the range of advocacies represented. For a complete list, updated contact numbers and the next orientation schedule for would-be volunteers, call them at 843-7044 or 843-5231, or log on to www. handsonmanila.org.

ANGELS HOME OF THE FOUNDATION OF OUR LADY OF PEACE MISSION—a refuge for sexually abused girls run by the Foundation of Our Lady of Peace Mission

BAHAY LINGAP-SAN LAZARO HOSPITAL—where the People Living with HIV/AIDS reside in times of their consultation and check-up at San Lazaro Hospital. It provides skills training on livelihood for the People with HIV with their significant others.

CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND EDUCATION (CEAE)—teaches awareness of the environment with the goal of producing environmentally conscious youth; develops modules that will help teachers and environment advocates drumbeat their cause (www.ceae.org)

CHILDHOPE ASIA PHILIPPINES (CHAP)—provides alternative educational opportunities and psycho-social support for street children (chap@childhope.org.ph; chsea@vasia.com)

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS FOUNDATION INC. (COFFI)—seeks to foster the self-reliance of people with physical disabilities and helps them integrate socially within their communities as whole and contributing citizens

CLEAN AND GREEN FOUNDATION INC. (CGFI)—introduces and promotes educational programs that are beneficial to the environment. The foundation is the caretaker of the Orchidarium and

The 12-step plan to a better world

EVER wonder what you can do to help? Making a difference starts with one gesture. And there are just so many ways to help—some of them are even fun. Here are a dozen suggestions, straight from the Hands On Manila calendar:

1. Chacha or rhumba with the elderly of the Miraculous Medal Family Home. Help everyone get a good workout—and enjoy yourself. Call Hands On Manila at tel. no. 843-7044.

2. Take in a homeless animal and gain a thankful family member. Call the Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) at tel. no. 475-1688.

3. Practice waste segregation. Wash reusable containers and plastics, including tetra packs and cans. Contact Linis Ganda Foundation at tel. no. 410-0383.

4. The sick and terminally ill children of Bantay Bata 163 need your financial support or donations of nutritional supplements, medicines and medical equipment. Call tel. nos. 925-5268 or 415-6625.

5.Tour a person on a wheelchair from Tahanang Walang Hagdan around a museum or mall. Call tel. no. 655-0059.

6. Spare some time for volunteer work at the Philippine General Hospital, and gain new friends. Call the Sinag Hospital Volunteers Group at tel. no. 843-6133.

7. Donate old books and magazines to a library before you buy new ones. Contact Books for the Barangays at tel. no. 722-9457.

8. Offer counseling services to victims of disasters, especially young children. Call Center for Family Ministries (CEFAM) at tel. no. 924-4434.

9. Refer a child with a cleft lip and

Figure It Out

23.8 million: Number of Filipinos living under the poverty line as of 2003

P10 million: Prize money given by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) for the top winner in the Dec. 10, 2006 Sweepstakes draw

P100: Cost of a single Sweepstakes ticket

P15,284,043: Prize money given by the PCSO for the Super Lotto draw on December 7, 2006

P10: Cost of a single Lotto bet

P15: Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) in the National Capital Region (NCR) as of 2001

P50: COLA in the NCR, as of 2006

Compiled by Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research

They Want You (from page 1

Butterfly Garden inside Luneta Park. It also conducts the annual Philippine Marathon for the Pasig River, an advocacy run for the benefit of saving the Pasig River. (cgfi@itextron.com)

COALITION OF SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY INC. (COSE)—a coalition of government and non-government organizations that work with community-based programs for the elderly poor (cose@cosephil.org, www.cosephil.org)

ENTREPRENEUR VOLUNTEER ASSISTANCE CHARITY FOUNDATION (EVA) SERVICE—founded in 1991, right after the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo, to help the Aetas build a new foundation for their communities and families, through a range of training and loan programs, educational scholarships, adult literacy and livelihood projects. (Jennifer Wallum, MBE, jg-rwallum@evacf.org; rosmaj@yahoo.com)

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY PHILIPPINES—provides decent, affordable housing for low-income families

HERITAGE CONSERVATION SOCIETY (HCS)—dedicated to the protection and preservation of Philippine heritage sites, structures and cultural landmarks through educational and outreach programs, legal advocacy and sustainable development initiatives (hcs_secretariat@yahoo.com, www.heritageconservationsociety.com)

HOLY FAMILY HOME MAKATI FOUNDATION, INC.—a protection center for neglected, orphaned, abandoned, maltreated and economically disadvantaged girls and young women

INTEL COMPUTER CLUBHOUSE—an after-school learning environment, where young people explore their own interests and become confident learners through the use of technology; provides a venue where young bright students can be trained hands-on in computer technologies (salang.cl@ayalafoundation.org, www.ayalafoundation.org)

IN TOUCH COMMUNITY SERVICES INC.—provides orientation and cultural sensitization to expatriate workers and their families. It is involved in counseling, business training and community services also for Filipino communities. (intouch@i-manila.com.ph, www.in-touch.org)

KAISAHANG BUHAY FOUNDATION (KBF)—one of the few NGOs legally allowed to place children for local and international adoption. It offers temporary, substitute family care to children, and provides food, shelter, medical care and counseling for expectant single mothers. (kbf@mozcom.com, www2.mozcom.com/-kbf)

KYTHE INC.—Kythe addresses the psycho-social needs of pediatric cancer patients at the Tumor Clinic of East Ave. Medical Center, as well as of their families, through counseling and education (kytheinc@yahoo.com, www.kythe.org)

MUSEO PAMBATA FOUNDATION INC.—a place where children, families and school groups can explore new and exciting learning opportunities by reliving our rich cultural heritage (mads@museopambata.org, www.museopambata.org)

MUSEUM FOUNDATION OF THE PHILIPPINES INC.—a membership and volunteer organization that raises awareness for the National Museum and arts and culture through lectures, cultural study tours and museum appreciation programs for teachers and students. (themuseumfoundation@yahoo.com)

MY ZOO VOLUNTEER—aims to help save the environment by educating children and the general public about the conservation of biodiversity; helps out at the Protected Animals and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB) in Quezon City (myzoo@rescueteam.com)

PASIG MEDICAL AND MATERNITY HOSPITAL FOUNDATION INC. (PMMHF, INC.)—provides maternal health care services to the urban poor within the Pasig area (Tel. no. 646-1067)

TAHANANG WALANG HAGDANAN INC. (TWHI)—a sustainable enterprise that provides employment for Persons with Disabilities and an ideal venue for the wholistic development of their physical, mental, economic, social and spiritual well-being (sisv@skyinet.net)

TULOY FOUNDATION INC.—provides shelter for street children and offers them formal and non-formal education to uplift their quality of living (www.tuloy.org)

VIRLANIE FOUNDATION—provides 12 homes caring for some 300 children, aged four to 18 years, who are abandoned, neglected, abused, just released from jail and/or are underprivileged (virlanie@virlanie.org, www.virlanie.org)

WHITE CROSS CHILDREN'S HOME—a child-care agency that provides temporary shelter for children of indigent families. It also undertakes child placement for abandoned or surrendered children.

WINNER FOUNDATION—gives "lungs" to Metro Manila through tree-planting to set an example that other communities can follow, and to create urban forests.

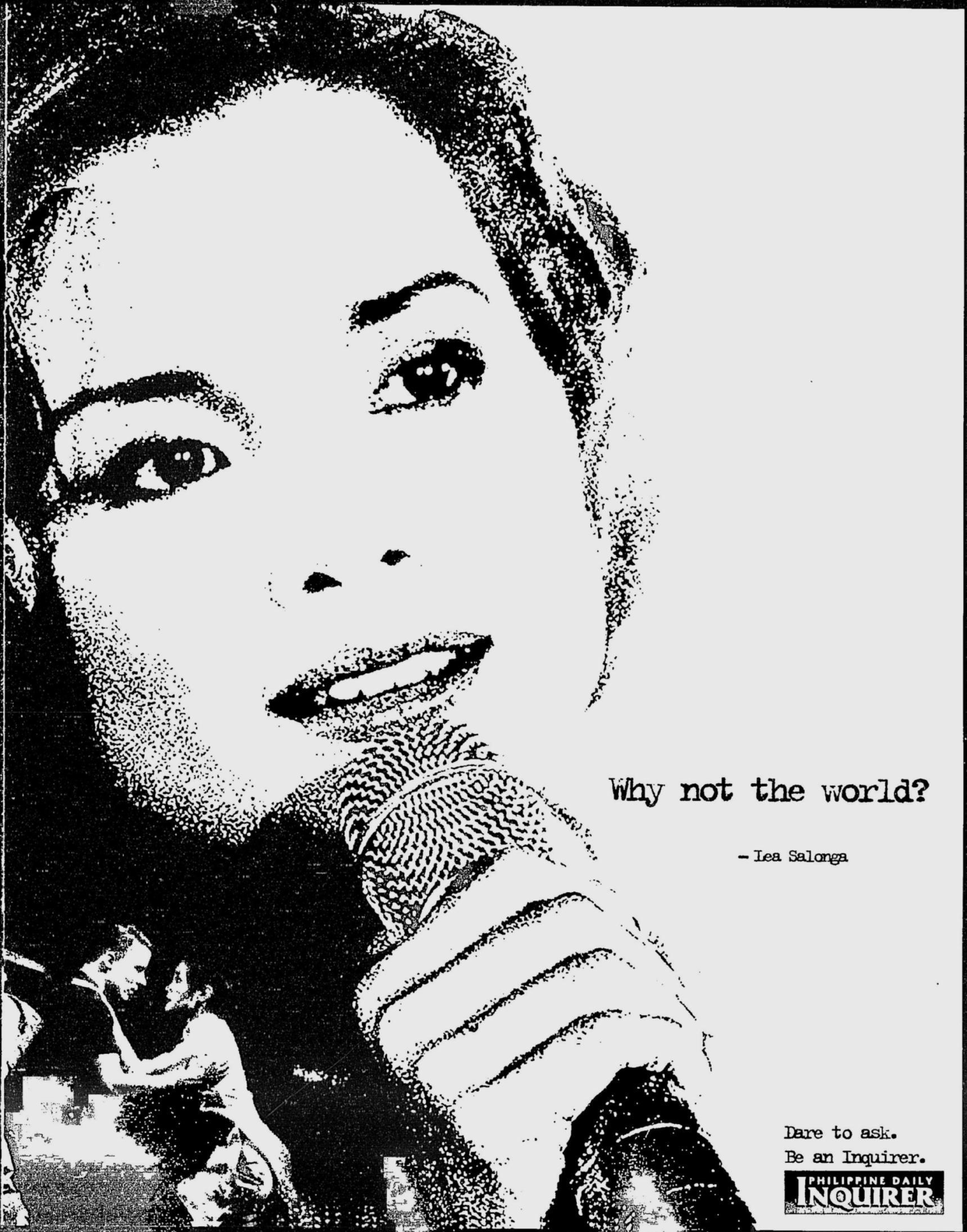
The 12-step plan to a better world

palate to the Philippine Band of Mercy (tel. no. 404-2516) for free corrective surgery.

10. Volunteer for Gawad Kalinga Build-Up projects at Baseco and other depressed areas in Metro Manila. Call tel. no. 255-7455.

11. Distribute flyers on walk-in women's centers to bar girls. Contact Belen sa Pasay, dedicated to prostituted young girls. Call tel. no. 833-3024.

12. Donate old costumes, cosmetics and jewelry for possible use in theater performances and productions. Call the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) at tel. no. 725-6244 or 721-8604.


Why not the world?
- Lea Salonga
Dare to ask.
Be an Inquirer.
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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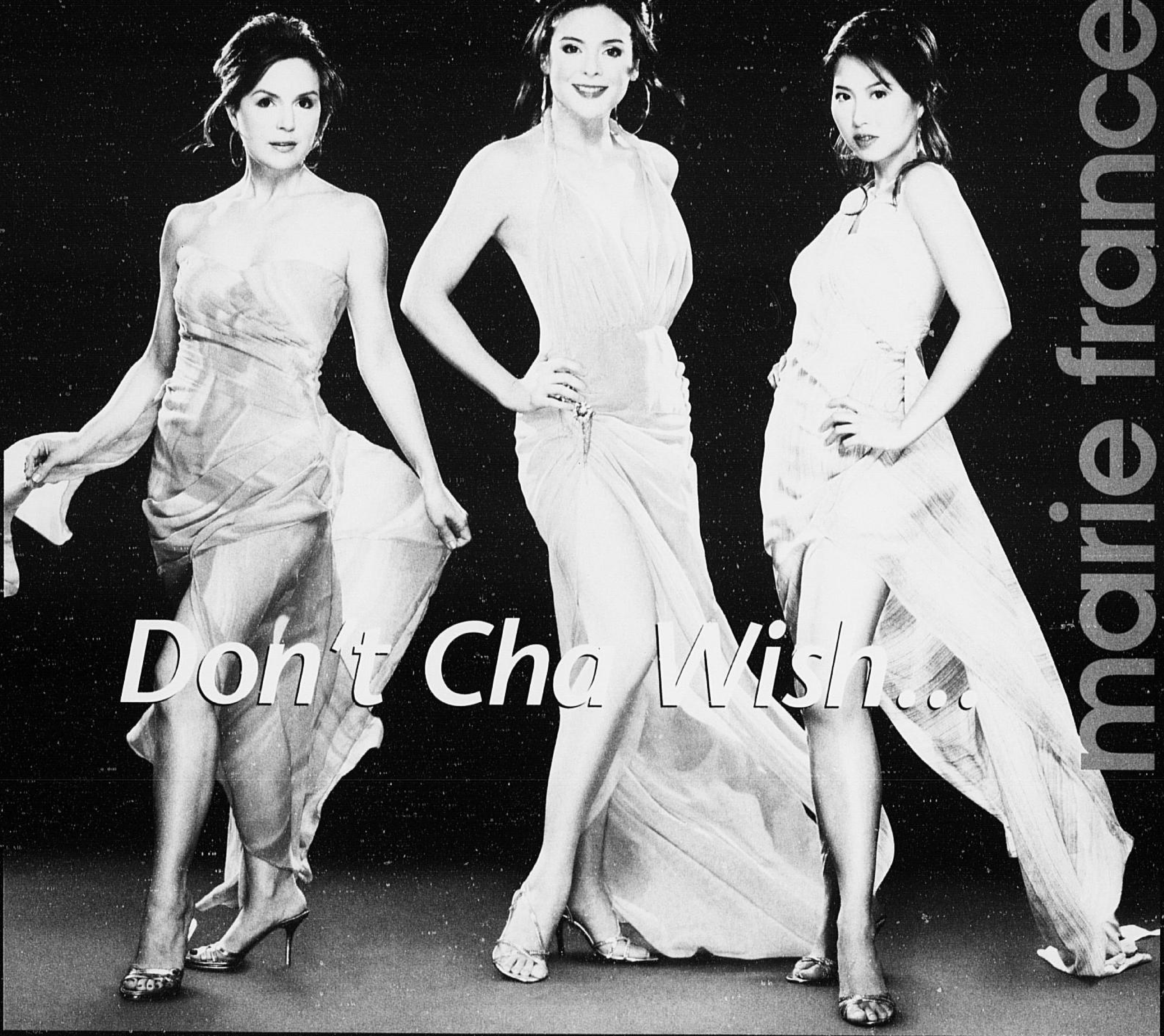
894-BODY (2639)



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